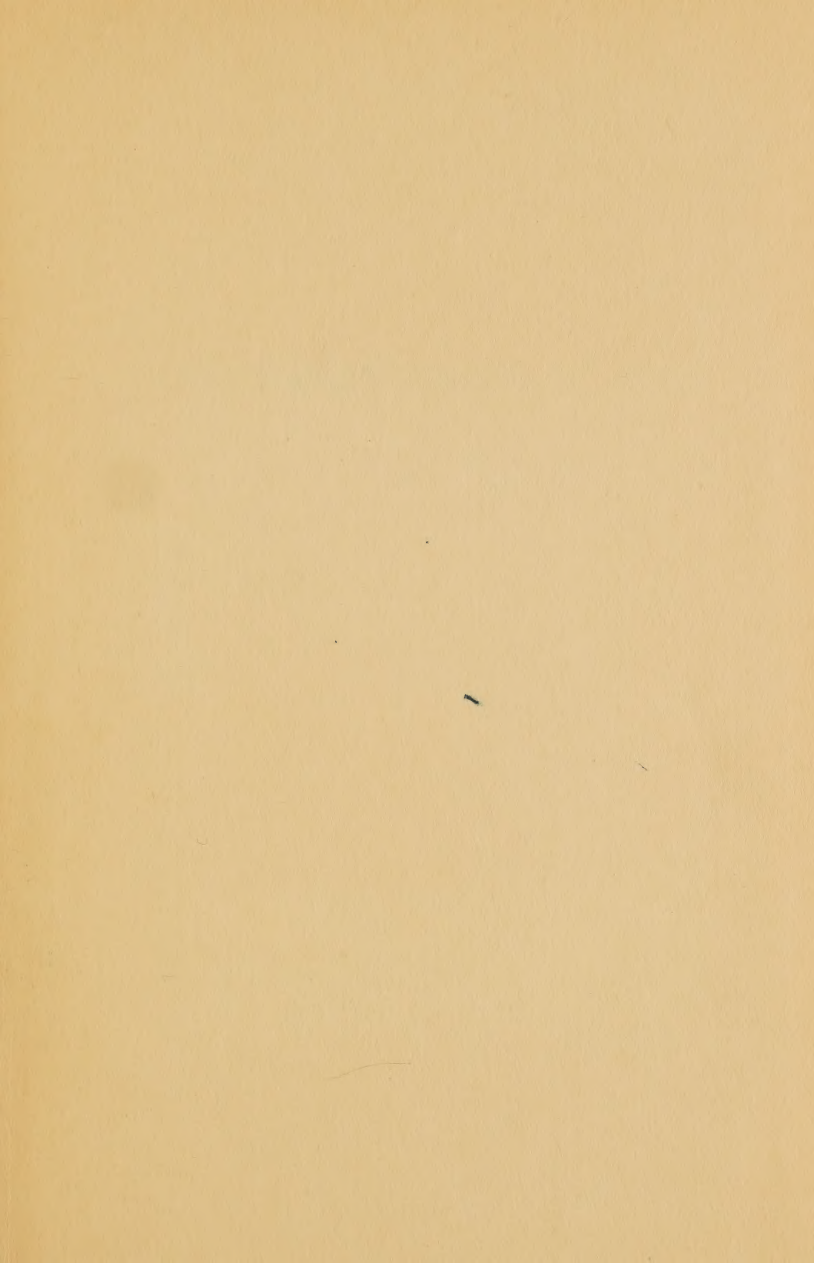


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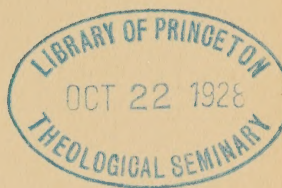


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CHRISTIANITY REBORN



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✓
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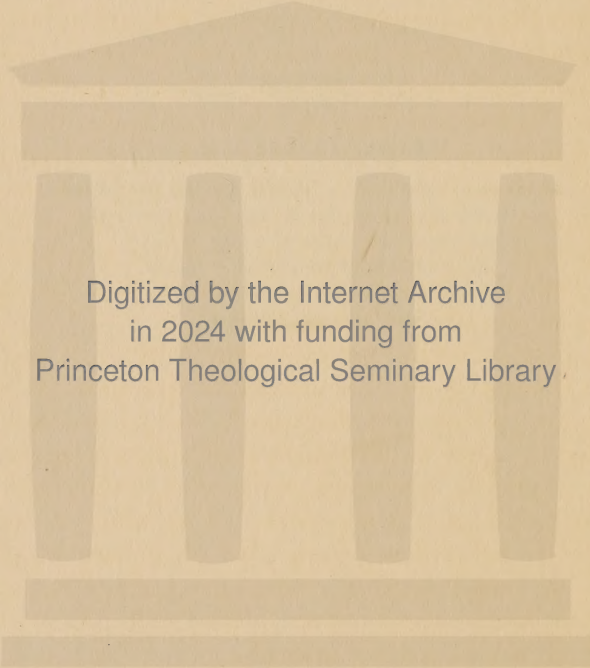
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TO

MYRTLE CLARKE LEH

*and the many others whose friendly presence has helped
me to the conviction that in man the universe is
witnessing a new order of being, as much
above the life of the animal as that is
above the empty helplessness of
dead physical existence.*



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PREFACE

THIS book was written for people who are honestly interested in Christianity and want to know what meaning and value that religion can have in the life of to-day. In a time of changing values such as the present, there cannot help but be a great deal of questioning, even as regards matters which constituted the very foundation of the life of our forefathers. Along with everything else that used to be taken for granted in the past, the Christian religion has come in for its share of scrutiny and disparagement.

It is undoubtedly true that many beliefs and practices which have long been associated with Christianity have been permanently discredited. For an intelligent person of to-day to blind himself willfully to the findings of modern experience and scientific study would be as foolish as it is impossible. That which can no longer be believed in or approved of, in view of all that has been learned in recent times, no one should attempt to maintain by sheer force of will. So much we may as well take for granted.

But the question remains, has Christianity as a whole been discredited? If not, what part of it remains available? Just what is the character of this part, and what value does it have in modern life? Is it adequate

for the requirements of human need, as we to-day understand that need, or should we look for some new religion, or for some substitute for religion, or have we perhaps reached a stage of development where we can get along without any of that sort of thing at all?

These are questions with which the present book attempts to deal. It is the thesis of the book that the heart of Christianity has been left untouched by all the revolutions of modern progress. That which gave the religion any real value or power in the past still remains as vital and effective as ever, and probably will remain so as long as man remains human. The changes that have taken place and that are still taking place affect only the externals of the religion, which must necessarily change, much as the style of dress in the future may be expected to differ from the styles of to-day. It is true that the changes in the externals of Christianity which are now in process are very far-reaching, but that is for the better rather than otherwise, since it is thus that the real genius of the religion is being liberated for effective action.

This book lays much stress on the fact that the organized forces of Christianity to-day, that is, the churches, fail to measure up to their promise. As agents for the promotion of "the good life" in individual and society they are singularly weak. The usual thing nowadays is to lay the blame for this on the times, or on the passing of Christianity as an effective force in civilized life. It is the opinion of the writer, however, that all the blame belongs to the churches

themselves. They have used their vast resources for the promotion of other ends than those of essential Christianity; they have kept the religion bound up in the forms and practices of bygone ages, and devoted themselves to institutional interests rather than the interests of human life. The changes which are now taking place in the general attitude toward Christianity may be expected to free the religion from this bondage and undoubtedly will also, in the long run, substantially increase the effectiveness of the churches as its agents.

Such criticisms, however, as the book may contain are incidental. Its primary aim is to set before the reader just what the essential core of Christianity consists in, and how this essential core or animating spirit has combined with the modern world-view to form an adequate program for the man of to-day, as well as a satisfying faith and a reliable criterion for moral guidance. The positive, constructive character of the New Christianity is the big fact around which every one of the twelve chapters is written.

I have felt, however, that more is needed than a bare statement of the general position of Christianity in its new form. The average individual of to-day wants specific guidance. He wants to know what gospel, if any, the religion has to offer him personally. He wants to know the specific demands the morality of the New Christianity has to make of him. He wants to know the details of the program into whose pursuit the Christian movement would enlist him, and the modes

of approach which will offer some reasonable prospects of success. In other words, if Christianity is to make much of an appeal, it must be brought into the everyday life of the individual and into relation with the world that he knows. I have therefore not hesitated to go into some detail as regarding the application of the religion in the life of to-day. I have been quite free, even, in making suggestions as to directions and modes of further advance.

A number of new ideas are put forward in the course of the argument. Just how many of them are absolutely new I would not be able to say. No doubt I have absorbed a good many of them in the course of my reading. Most of them, however, have developed out of my own thinking and experience, both in the profession of the ministry and outside of it. I do not expect full acquiescence in all of them on the part of every one. They represent my contribution toward the solution of what may be called the Christian world's major problem. I shall be glad to welcome criticisms and discussions.

For a book like this no apology needs to be offered. In this age of change and uncertainty, there is a great deal of seeking for definite clews to stability and certainty. To give his life the meaning and value he aspires after, the individual needs more to rely on than the flux of passing fashion. That Christianity, in its new form, satisfies this need is my firm conviction. But the New Christianity is not well understood. While an undeniable reality in the lives of many individuals,

it is still grossly misrepresented and condemned in quarters where every interest would seem to call for its enthusiastic support. It is for the friends of Christianity, rather than for its enemies, that I write.

L. L. LEH.

CHICAGO, ILL.

April 20, 1928.

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CHRISTIANITY REBORN

CHAPTER I

THE FIVE BASIC CONVICTIONS OF CHRISTIANITY

WE may speak, in our day, of a new Christianity—a new religion still in the process of becoming, but having defined itself sufficiently to allow a reasonably exact description. It is actually a new religion, unlike any of the religions of the past. It would, in fact, have been impossible in the past. Nevertheless, it is Christianity, for it grows out of the Christian tradition and retains the essential spirit which has marked Christianity from the beginning. The change that is taking place is one of form and expression.

In order that we may understand the genius of the new religion, it will be necessary to consider the animating spirit of Christianity throughout its history. The various dogmas, rituals, institutional policies, superstitions and the more or less naïve world-views of Christianity in the past were incidents of time and place. They followed naturally as implications of the rest of the thinking which characterized the times in which they arose. Beneath all of them and affecting them profoundly by its influence, was the soul, or

vitalizing principle of the religion. This remained the same, except, perhaps, in intensity, through all the vicissitudes which attended the external forms. It is this inner core, or kernel, of Christianity which is of interest to us in any consideration of the new religion.

When I speak of the animating spirit of Christianity, I am not referring to anything vague or mystical. It consists of a series of beliefs or convictions, held without question by Christians of every period of Christian history. They have never been formulated into an authoritative creed, though they are as definite as the statements to be found in any creed. They have not been so formulated because it was not necessary. They took their place in the individual Christian's thought-system as unobtrusively and as inevitably as did the language which he learned in his early environment. The average person was barely more conscious of them than he was of his digestion. Theologians, in their discussions and hair-splittings, always took them for granted—or nearly always, for philosophy, with its inhuman logic, has now and again opposed itself to one or the other of the Christian convictions. In the present scientific age, when many people try their hand at philosophy on their own account, and usually with very poor preparation for the task, it frequently happens that some or all of the Christian convictions are thus assaulted. But the mass of the people of Christian origin remain unaffected by this infidelity. Their faith continues as before; in fact, most of them scarcely realize that it has been attacked.

The cornerstone of the Christian faith is belief in the possibility of a better future for individual human beings. Time was when that better future was conceived of as postponed until the period after death. That was because physical and social conditions on the earth were so bad that a better future in this life was despaired of. Since physical and social conditions have been greatly improved in recent times and there is promise of still greater improvement, more attention is being directed toward the possibilities of a better future for the individual in the present life. But, whether ancient, medieval or modern, Christianity has always been a bringer of good news, a preacher of a gospel, and the substance of the gospel has been, "There is something better ahead."

The optimism of Christianity, however, was never blind. The "something better" which it promised, and still promises, is not thought of as something decreed by Fate and therefore inevitable, but as something which must be earned if it is to be realized at all. What the faith of the Christian insists on is that better things are possible, and that, whatever its present condition, human life in no case is a thing to be despaired of, but that it is worth having and that more can be made of it than it now is.

So long as people's lives are wrapped up in an unthinking round of semi-instinctive activities, the natural thing for them is to take the worthwhileness of life for granted. But when they begin to reflect upon their condition and upon the difficulties standing in the

way of any improvement of that condition, the optimistic tendency changes to one of pessimism, or is likely to do so. Pessimism is thus the result of thought, and it is not strange that philosophy, culture and enlightenment should frequently be tainted with gloom. They must almost inevitably become so, unless a strong antidote is provided. It has been one of Christianity's functions to furnish this antidote.

In combating the pessimistic tendency attendant upon the increasing thoughtfulness of the human race, Christianity has rendered man an incalculable service. It may, of course, have achieved the purpose at times by stifling thought itself, but at such times it was not working in accord with its own proper genius. When at its purest, the religion has stimulated thought. There have, in fact, been long periods in the history of Western civilization when it furnished almost the sole incentive for mental progress. But, whatever the source of the increased mental activity, Christianity has served the cause of human progress by enabling men to continue to believe in their future and inducing them to redouble their efforts toward self- and social betterment rather than to slacken such efforts, which is the inevitable consequence of pessimism.

The Christianity of to-day, while putting less emphasis on the prospects of a future life, has by no means given up that hope, nor is there any adequate reason why it should do so. The main stress, however, is put on the greater possibilities which the present life holds for the individual. The modern Christian has become

aware of the fact that Bunyan's pilgrim was far happier while on the road to the Celestial City than while he still remained a dissatisfied resident of the City of Destruction. The spiritual resources of human life seem to be practically inexhaustible, but the average individual has tapped but few of them. It is by making more of these resources available that Christianity claims to fulfill its promise to the individual, and there can be no question but that, in countless cases, it has been successful in doing so, making the individual life richer and happier thereby.

The pilgrim's road to the Celestial City, however, was not an easy one. It was no place for the overly timid, or for the indolent, or for such as preferred sensual indulgence to spiritual attainment: these felt more comfortable amid the bestiality of the City of Destruction. Christianity attaches a price to its promise. A second basic conviction of the religion is the belief in individual responsibility. The "something better ahead" is only for those who measure up to this responsibility. The Christian is ever concerned with questions of right and wrong. He has standards to live up to; failings to overcome; unschooled passions to tame.

Perhaps Christian notions of what is right and what is wrong were a little too definite in the past. Hard and fast lines were drawn, with little room left for nice discrimination. Men frequently forgot that circumstances alter cases, and that humanity and its needs rank even higher than morality and its demands. The

conceptions themselves, of just what constitutes right and what constitutes wrong, were often crude and artificial. And so injustice was done. This, however, was unavoidable, considering the undeveloped mentality of the times. Greater injustice was done where Christianity did not hold sway, or where its hold was only nominal.

The Christian idea of individual responsibility is the only basis upon which a successful democracy can be built. Where, in the past, the idea had the force of a conviction with all or nearly all the members of the community, as in the case of the New England towns in the first century of their existence, the maintenance of a satisfactory democracy presented no difficulties. It is the custom, nowadays, to speak of the people of those communities as the victims of repression, but it is seriously to be doubted whether those people experienced half the dissatisfaction that prevails among the free and easy beneficiaries of present-day civilization. The standards of those times were voluntary, and life had some meaning then—it very often does not now. And the feasibility of democracy is being gravely questioned.

Genuine Christianity had in no way relaxed its emphasis on individual responsibility. With vast numbers of nominal Christians, the case may be different, but they cannot be taken into consideration here. Genuine Christianity has broadened the range of responsibility rather than narrowed it, and has subtracted nothing from the urgency of its demands. Standards of thought and action are higher than ever, and duties have largely

increased in their scope. However, much of the old artificiality in moral conceptions is being removed in favor of more natural estimates of human need and of the Christian ideal as a whole. In fact, an absolutely set code of moral standards is no longer seriously considered by the best Christian minds. The gain is in greater flexibility and effectiveness in application, but not in moral laxity. The new Christianity is as convinced of the necessity of the individual's living up to the demands of the right as ever was the old.

Perhaps the surest mark of distinction between the genuine Christian of to-day and the un-Christian world about him is his belief in the supremacy of the spiritual in human life. This belief has been a ruling conviction in the minds of the best Christians from the beginning, and has been the main source of the "sweetness and light" which the religion has managed to bring to the world throughout its history. Of course, in all periods of Christian history, many individuals have been attracted to the religion without learning to appreciate the higher values upon which the genius of Christianity placed its greatest stress. Such persons were not necessarily hypocritical in their adherence to the faith, but, because of their lack of understanding where the very soul of their religion was concerned, became guilty of practices and judgments in the name of Christianity which have, at times, brought the religion into ill repute. And the same thing still occurs to-day.

The new Christianity, however, is trying to eliminate all such misinterpretation of its spirit and purpose by

making the matter of values the starting point and foundation of its faith. The older Christianity usually recognized only two sets of motives, desires and acts—the good and the bad. The more enlightened thinking of to-day distinguishes many grades or planes of thought and action. On the lower planes, thought and action are dominated by interests or desires physical in their origin, and, though often disguised, are animal-like in motive and effect. They are not necessarily bad, but often become so by being allowed to work against the higher interests of human life. On the higher planes, thought and action are determined by what are known as the spiritual interests. These include the human need of mutual sympathy and understanding, of concern for the common welfare and practice in the pursuit of it, of moral rightness, of intellectual quest, of devotion to worth-while ends, of artistic insight and self-expression, of admiration and worship, of creative usefulness, and other states or activities distinctively human. Again, on these levels, there may be both good and bad, for good and bad are determined by the relation of a motive or an action to human welfare as a whole, and even a spiritual interest may be so pursued as to result in harm. But the general tendency of these interests is to make for the good, and discriminating persons value them accordingly.

Throughout its history, Christianity has stressed the necessity of devoting one's energies to the spiritual interests, or, at least, to some of them. Such devotion, however, was frequently looked upon as a means to an

end rather than as an end in itself, and so lost its force and wholesome character. The new Christianity puts unquestioning faith in the intrinsic value of the spiritual itself, believing that virtue is its own reward, and that it is only in the sphere of the spiritual that man can find any adequate measure of satisfaction and self-realization. The Christian is firmly convinced of the superior power of the spiritual in the human world, and believes that, in time, it will be the dominant principle in every human life. However, apart from any outlook toward the future, the spiritual as an element in human life is a present fact, and what distinguishes the Christian from the materialist or the sensualist is his appreciation and high valuation of that fact. The new Christianity goes still further, and makes this appreciation and valuation the foundation of its faith. But of this more later.

Another characteristic Christian conviction is the belief in the unity of the human race and the brotherhood of man. From the days of St. Paul, Christianity has, in theory, at least, risen above the dividing lines of tribe, nation, class and color among men and has tried to act on the principle that all human beings are equally precious in the sight of God. When one considers the disruptive tendencies that have been at work, splitting mankind into groups hostile and unsympathetic toward each other, how at one time it was tribe against the whole world, and, later, city or nation against the rest of mankind, and often even caste or class against all else, it must be admitted that the

Christianity of the past has been singularly successful in maintaining its ideal of human brotherhood. That many of the old prejudices have remained, with the resulting exploitation of one people by another, is not the fault of Christianity, but of the more primitive, un-Christian spirit which was able to maintain itself alongside of Christianity and which too often became dominant when people acted in groups.

The belief of the Christian in the unity of the human race does not imply that the differences between individuals, nations or races are overlooked. The well-informed Christian will readily admit that the variation in temperament, talent and general ability between individuals is very great, and that between races or national groupings, while not so marked, it is still noticeable. But he insists that, in essential humanity, in their need of the spiritual to put meaning into their lives, in their capacity for sympathetic understanding of other human beings and for fruitfully coöperating with them, all stand on common ground. Apart from temperamental differences, and differences in special bent or talent, which, as like as not, may be found among the children of the same family, the Christian attributes the group and racial differences between the various sections of mankind to the influence of climate, institutions, various vicissitudes, the presence or absence of opportunities and the right kind of stimulus, or, speaking in general, to the past history of those sections. That is, he regards them as differences which time can remedy just as time has brought them about. If any

race is superior in present achievement, it is because its opportunities and circumstances have been superior, and the same may be said of any caste or class.

This proposition was seriously opposed by the philosopher Nietzsche, and is being attacked to-day by a number of pseudo-scientists who, having studied a few select cases and made a few laboratory experiments, assure us that the elect among the human race are few, that they all belong to a certain race (their own), and that no human being, except descendants of these same elect, can ever hope to be favored with any but the most mediocre ability, down to the very end of time. Were this dogma not put forth in the name of science, which has become the god of many of the people of to-day, its ridiculous nature would be universally manifest. The Christian takes a more humble view of his own attainments and capacities, and is able to see enough in any of his fellowmen to call them Brothers, and to treat them as such. Experience has shown that this treatment, provided it is wise in other respects, is by no means disappointing.

The consistent Christian shapes both his attitude toward individual neighbors and his opinion on national and world problems in accordance with this faith in the essential brotherhood of man. He recognizes the fact, of course, that it is not always wise to allow even to one's brother full and unrestricted access to one's house and home, for the brother may not be inclined to act in a brotherly manner; but that is another question.

The Christian is as fully aware as anyone that the unity of the human race is not yet realized in practice, that, if all the world is one family, it does not act like one. He is aware also of the fact that most human individuals fail lamentably in measuring up to the requirements of the human standard in their living. Men still are too much animal, and so miss most of their birthright, besides multiplying problems for themselves and their world. The social, economic and political systems which man has created hinder his self-realization as much as they aid it, and, in many cases, they hinder more than they help. All this is recognized, but does not furnish ground for pessimism. There is another of the basic convictions of the Christian religion to be considered.

It is this: belief in the possibility of making the world of man a spiritual and a righteous world. It was this belief which started Jesus on his historic campaign in Galilee and Judea and brought him to his untimely end. Possibly Jesus, being young and enthusiastic, allowed his hopes to run too high. The task is taking longer than he anticipated, though considerable progress has been made. It used to be supposed that God would bring about the hoped-for consummation all of a sudden, by some great miraculous act. There are still some people who look for this, but enough time has elapsed since the hope was first voiced and people's understanding of the ways of God has sufficiently improved to make it clear to most modern Christians, at least of the more intelligent type, that the making of the

Kingdom of Righteousness is a task delegated to man and that there will be nothing sudden or miraculous in its realization. This conclusion, however, does not trouble the Christian. Rather, it makes his faith more effective, for, the atmosphere having been cleared of vain expectations, he can make his preparations more commensurate with the size of the task.

It is the way of the pessimist to discourage, if he can, any attempt at greater achievement than has yet been accomplished. The Christian's project of making a spiritual and a righteous world, being the most stupendous undertaking ever seriously considered by man, has not escaped this treatment. Civilization's apostles of gloom are numerous, especially since the World War. However, Christianity's faith has, as usual, a fairly broad basis in established fact. Since man began on his road toward civilization, he has constantly been achieving things greater and more difficult than had ever been done before. Apparently the only thing needful is for him to have faith that the thing desired can be done, and to continue in that faith long enough. And there is nothing inherently unreasonable in the project of making a righteous world.

The thing that has become clear to the intelligent Christian of to-day is that the great aim of Christianity cannot be realized by a sudden mass movement, an artificially stimulated stampede into the Kingdom of God. Winning "the world for Christ in a generation" is a proposal as far out of the bounds of reason and experience as is the expectation that God will establish

a reign of righteousness without human aid. Old habits linger long, and spiritual growth is slow. Moreover, man's accumulated institutions, more tenacious of their hold even than habits, will all have to be made over. And, in the process, many costly mistakes will be made, movements begun or lines of development encouraged which perhaps, some of them, will set back human progress for centuries. Man, who has so long been a fool, will not suddenly become wise. All this the new Christianity is taking into account.

Men are beginning to learn that to make any progress toward the realization of so great an aim as that of Christianity, a great deal of study is necessary. In the first place, the aim itself must be brought out of the domain of vague generalities and given a definite content, consistent with the actual needs of man. Just what are those needs? How may those needs be progressively satisfied, without impoverishing life at one point while enriching it at another? These are questions which will demand generations of serious study; so far, they have scarcely yet been looked into. The human race has no conscious aim as yet—not any. And Christianity, while it has one, has contented itself with one so superficial and inadequate that more than half of the civilized world would flatly refuse to recognize it as desirable even could it be realized.

With an adequate aim before him, the Christian will still face the main part of his task—that of translating the aim into realized fact. The world is a going concern; it is the resultant of innumerable forces, many

of them of great momentum, many of them but poorly understood or still unknown. Modifications are taking place all the time; the world of to-day is not the same as that of yesterday, and to-morrow, probably, the differences will be still greater. It is in such a world that the Christian will have to work toward the realization of his aim. The task will require comprehensive and exhaustive study, it will require plans definitely kept in mind and consistently carried out by successive workers through a hundred generations, it will require the flexibility of mind which can adapt itself to constantly changing conditions without losing sight, for a moment, of its own essential purpose. In addition to these things, the task will require an unfailing succession of earnest men and women, strong in the faith that their objective can be reached, enthusiastic, fully devoted, and yet always patient and painstaking in their work. However, difficulties have never been much of a deterrent to brave men in the past, provided the objective was clear and the way open.

CHAPTER II

THE REVOLUTION IN CHRISTIANITY

WHILE it is true that, at heart, Christianity has been the same religion from its beginnings down to its most recent manifestations, moved by the same basic convictions and approaching the human problem in much the same spirit, it is also true that, so far as the outward character of the religion is concerned, immense changes have taken place. During the nineteen centuries of Christian history, neither the mind of man nor his culture and institutions have stood still. There has been considerable modification and, we hope, progress. And the outward character of Christianity changed with the rest. If it had not done so, Christianity as a religion would have become obsolete and been forgotten.

All the changes, however, which took place in the more remote past were mild as compared with those which have been taking place within the last century or half century, and which have come to a head, so to speak, only within the last few decades. What has been taking place in recent times amounts to nothing less than a complete revolution in religion. Of course, this revolution in religion has not been an isolated phenomenon. It grew out of the need of the times, and

is the result of thorough and far-reaching changes throughout the domains of thought and life as found in the modern world. Every sphere of human interest has seen its revolution; industry and commerce, politics, domestic and social life, education, even art and literature, all have been transformed. The man of to-day lives in a world which is not at all the same as that with which his grandfather was familiar in the days of his youth. It is not strange, then, that there should have been profound changes in religion.

It cannot be said that these changes were always welcome. Even to-day there are many individuals and societies who look upon them as evidences of the threatened downfall of Christianity itself and whose opposition to every one of them is bitter and uncompromising. To some minds, and this is especially true of the less sophisticated, religion and its institutions are indissolubly bound together. For them, the established religious doctrine, practice or authority is the foundation without which the religion cannot exist and whose destruction must mean the destruction of religion. We hear to-day, therefore, of a wing of the Christian Church known as the "Fundamentalists." They are worried about the foundations of their religion, which they believe to consist in certain arbitrary doctrines, long since rendered untenable to reasonable minds by scientific study. As regards the actual number and power of the "Fundamentalists" there is some dispute, but the probability is that, were one to deduct the number of those who may be temporarily swayed by the

leaders of the movement but who are not vitally interested in it, the strength of the movement would prove to be comparatively insignificant. At any rate, it is a rapidly waning strength.

On the other hand, the number of those who actively and whole-heartedly welcome the change is small also. The majority of the people are comparatively indifferent, and may be said to endure the change rather than actively aid or oppose it. Some reluctantly submit to what seems to them the inevitable, step by step. But most of them, it is to be feared, have lost interest in the matter entirely, or nearly so, their minds being occupied with other interests. Religion has undergone a period of decline in the civilized world, as was probably to be expected in a time of radical change and attending uncertainty. That this loss of interest is not a permanent effect of civilization may be seen in the renewed and growing spirit of inquiry which is showing itself at the time of this writing. Articles on religious subjects are once more making their way into every magazine of standing, and religious books never had as wide a sale as now. It is probable that the decline of interest in religion which took place in the past decades was due to a general loss of faith in the ideas commonly preached in the churches during that period, and that the present revival of interest is due to a popular awakening to religious values and facts of which, until recently, none but a few had been aware. Meanwhile, there have been some who never lost their interest, but who continued actively at work remaking

Christianity according to the ideas and standards of to-day. It is these who have become the world's recognized teachers of religion.

The revolution in religion must not, of course, be looked upon as a finished thing. It is still in process, and far from its final stages. The reactionary elements are still strong and the older Christianity does not seem to lack loud-voiced advocates, very positive in reiterating their time-worn message and demanding an unquestioning loyalty to tradition. It is true that their appeal has lost its force and that the crowd passes them by with a smile. But it is also true that those who hold to the new Christianity have not yet been able to occupy the breach, at least not adequately. Most of them are too uncertain of their own position to be very successful in impressing others, they waste time and energy on matters of small consequence and seem unaware, or but partly aware, of the major issues at stake. The pioneers of religious reconstruction are still working in comparative isolation, handicapped by institutional requirements out of accord with the spirit of the age, and by the misrepresentations and opposition of the many who either do not understand them or have no desire to do so. No organized, unified movement in the direction of the new Christianity has yet been achieved. Very little progress has been made toward the development of a technique of religious promotion, consistent with the requirements of the new viewpoint. It would seem, almost, as though the main part of the work of reconstruction still remained to be done.

In the vast changes which have taken place, it is therefore not surprising that the negative element should predominate. The religious revolution, so far, has been associated in the average mind with ideas and practices relinquished, with weakened loyalties and ruined faith. The concern of most individuals of a serious bent has been rather to save something from the wreckage than to build up a new and better structure in place of the one destroyed. Only a comparative few have had the vision to see the full possibilities of the new order of things. These have striven to build up anew, from the ground up, without reference to what existed in the past.

In reviewing some of the outstanding changes which have taken place in the beliefs and practices of Christianity largely within the memory of persons still alive, it must, then, be borne in mind that the negative aspects of these changes have taken place much more widely than the positive, constructive aspects which logically belong with them. In many cases it is true that where there are a hundred individuals who have come to see the unreasonableness of the old there is scarcely one who has come to a clear understanding of the character and significance of the new. In the present chapter, however, I shall bring old and new together as though the change had already been effected completely. The full significance of the change will thus stand revealed in the contrast.

Most discussed, perhaps, is the difference in doctrine between the old and the new. The theology of our

childhood included a scheme of salvation which covered the entire period from the beginning of man's life on earth to the end of the world. At the beginning, it was said, God created a perfect, sinless man, but that man sinned and involved all of his descendants in his guilt. All persons since Adam's day, therefore, have been born in sin, and there would have been little hope for any of them, had not God condescended to open a way out for them by sending his son and co-divinity, Jesus Christ, who took away the guilt by his sacrifice. All that now remained for the individual human being to do was to accept the merit of this sacrifice and apply it to himself. To seal the operation and make it valid, he must be baptized and partake of the Holy Communion and otherwise put himself under the rule of the Church, which was God's ark of safety for man on earth. The salvation thus secured was not expected to become fully effective in the present life, was thought of, indeed, as frequently increasing a person's troubles, difficulties and pains, but, if one remained faithful, it would come to its fruit in the world to come, after the great Judgment Day, when the saved would be separated from the lost, the former to be indulged in the unending delights of heaven, while the latter were to suffer eternal torments in hell.

This was the system in the main, but there were many inconsistencies, contradictions and cross currents of opinion, which kept the religious world in a continual turmoil of argument and strife, and also kept the "saints" from being too sure of their position and too

satisfied with themselves. The nineteenth century of Christian history was the heyday of religious sects, which flourished in ever-increasing numbers. But, however bitter the strife and competition between them, practically all of them agreed to the general outlines of the scheme of salvation as I have set it down.

To-day, at least so far as the educated are concerned, the whole system has fallen to the ground. Instead of a sinless, perfect being, early man is conceived of as a brute, slowly making his way upward toward the human level. Instead of a Fall of Man, there has been a continual but slow rise. Instead of being born in an entirely sinful, hopeless condition, every normal individual is born with the seeds of the good life within him, nor can the guilt of his fathers be justly attributed to him. No one being's sacrifice can possibly take away the guilt of another being, each individual having to answer for his own misdeeds and suffer the consequences of them. Christ's sacrifice has therefore lost its former meaning. At the same time the person of Christ himself has undergone a change of estimate. He is no longer thought of as a God come out of heaven in order to let himself be nailed to a cross, but as a man striving for the spiritual uplift of his race. The sacraments and ministrations of the Church have lost their magical efficacy, and the Church itself is no longer looked upon as an "ark of safety." The Judgment Day, with its hard and fast division of saved and lost, has ceased to be seriously considered except by a few of the backward sects. Hell has largely disappeared from

the popular thought, and ideas of heaven have been modified almost beyond recognition.

Man, as conceived by the modern mind, is thought of as working his way up, gradually and more or less painfully, from the animal level to the spiritual level of life. The work cannot be done for him, he must do it for himself, in large measure each individual must do it for himself. However, he can well use every inspiration and every encouragement or stimulus which can come to him, from any source. The great leaders of the human race, Christ included, have therefore been able to play outstanding rôles in man's progress. As for the individual, however, he is never absolutely safe, has never arrived at his final goal—he must struggle on and on until death takes him. After that—we can only hope: man's concern is with the present world.

Aside from the scheme of salvation, though touching it at points, the doctrine of the older Christianity included those battle-grounds of the learned, the creeds, catechisms and confessions of faith. Here were found doctrines of a tyrannical but all-powerful God, of a super-earthly Christ, of an infallible Bible, of sacraments of unique potency, and other wonders, now largely discredited and, for the most part, happily ignored. Ideas of God and of Christ have been modified to fit into modern views concerning man, Bible-reading, except as a perfunctory practice, has almost ceased, and many of the doctrines, once considered absolutely vital, have so far decayed that it is almost necessary to seek out an antiquarian to explain them.

The whole mass of doctrine of past Christianity hinged around man's longing to escape from this world and its evil. The world was counted bad, man himself was counted bad, his life on earth was considered a sad and painful lot. Not satisfied with the estimate that man and his world in themselves are "wholly unapt to any good and prone to all evil," the theologians of former days delighted to enlarge on the idea of a devil, an ever-present, constantly active spirit of evil, universally at hand to drag man lower still and check all influences toward the good. Escape, accordingly, became the religious man's chief passion. The doctrinal system was constructed to point out and define, in exact detail, the one way of escape supposed to be open. Being based upon naïve and erroneous conceptions of man and his lot in the universe, it was only natural that the system itself should be untrue to fact and unsuited to man's real need.

The man of to-day is a better judge of the nature of the universe and of the meaning and value of his present life in it. He does not wish to escape from the world. Rather, he longs to realize himself more fully while living there. He looks upon the world as imperfect, rather than as evil. What needs to be done, to his mind, is not to condemn the world, or to shun it, so far as possible, but to improve it. The only devil that he can see at large in the world is man's own imperfectly spiritualized personality, and that is by no means hopeless. In fact, the man of to-day believes in himself and his fellows. Fundamentally, they are good,

and the possibilities in them are great. What they need is not so much escape as development and a proper chance. To this end, the spiritual power or powers back of the universe are believed to lend their aid.

The changed outlook on life and the world which characterizes modern times has revolutionized the notion of authority or sanction in religion. In their religious quest, individuals used to look for some sure source of information on ultimate matters, some infallible authority outside of themselves which could set them on the true road to salvation and insure their successful attainment of that much-desired end. The disciples of Jesus had to have their infallible Christ; the early Christians, their infallible Apostles; the people of the Middle Ages, their infallible Church, headed by an infallible Pope; the Protestant Christians, their infallible Bible and their infallible standards of faith. In this, of course, the attitude of the people of the past was no different from what it was in other spheres of human interest. Authority of some sort was indispensable, no matter what was undertaken. The slavish dependence of lawyers on precedent, of scholars on traditional methods and authorities, of the people on their princes and bishops, and of these, in their turn, on the established customs of the day—these are matters of common knowledge to all students of history. When one authority became intolerable and was set aside, it was only to put a new one in its place.

But the day of unquestioned authorities seems to be pretty well past. The modern man is individualistic

and his ideal, at least, is to be self-determining. He has not, of course, ceased to look to established authority for guidance, but he reserves the right to choose between the various claimants for that position, and he does not hold any of them as above criticism, as infallible, or even as permanent. The effect of this attitude on religious authorities and their power has been revolutionary. Formulated standards of faith, Bible, Pope, Church, Apostles and even Christ himself have had to stand the searching light of scientific criticism and, in the average intelligent mind, have lost the position of acknowledged infallibility which they formerly held. The modern man is at any time ready to set his own opinion against any of their pronouncements, if any difference becomes evident. If this is true with regard to the main seats of authority as formerly recognized, it is even more true as regards the authority of the individual minister or church. Where that authority used to be considerable formerly, it has become almost non-existent to-day. "The universal priesthood of believers," an ideal first suggested in the Reformation Age, has at last become a realized fact among Christians. Each individual has become the final judge of his own religion.

Another vital matter in which a noticeable change has taken place is that which concerns the motive which Christian leaders appeal to in their work of propaganda or control. For more than a thousand years the principal motive appealed to was that of fear—fear of the torments of an everlasting hell, said to be in store for

all such as did not take the specific way to salvation outlined in the doctrine of the day. A secondary motive, though much weaker in its appeal to the average person, was that of the expectation of the delights of heaven, said to be reserved for the select few who could meet all the tests. One may still hear these motives played upon by an occasional preacher or revivalist, but the appeal has lost its force except among the ignorant. The motives to which modern Christianity makes its appeal have to do with the present life, and are of a positive, constructive character. The desire to better one's own life, or to improve one's surroundings, or the social order and condition of humanity in general, the passion for righteousness, the love of truth, the longing for more adequate spiritual realization in any or all of various ways—these are motives which build up character and personality, and also make for a richer and saner world-life. And they are the motives upon which the new Christianity bases its whole claim for consideration.

In the midst of all the other change which took place, it was inevitable that there should occur some modification in the moral ideas held by Christian people. Standards of right and wrong have always fluctuated considerably in accordance with the varying degrees of spiritual development on the part of individuals as also with the differences in customary practice in various parts of the world. It was usually supposed, however, by Christians of the past, that right and wrong were two distinct and definite categories, written in God's

law from the beginning, and consisting, in each case, of a series of definite items of thought or practice. That is, to do or to think certain things was supposed to be right under all circumstances and to have been so from the beginning of time, and to do or to think certain other things was supposed to be wrong, again without regard to time or conditions or the persons concerned. Where such an attitude prevailed, it is not strange that moral standards should have been highly artificial, working continual injustice and quite inadequate to serve the requirements of human need. Judged by these standards, men good both in intention and in practice had to bear the odium which properly belongs to the worst of sinners, and men positively hateful in motive and deed were commended as if they had been saints. It took the world a long time to wake up to this perversion of morality. Even yet there is considerable doubt in many minds as to whether the old standards do not, after all, define the moral law for all time.

The tendency of the times, however, is to repudiate any system of morality which consists of fixed commands and prohibitions. For some people, this means a repudiation of all morality, or, at least, as much of it as would interfere with the free indulgence of the lower impulses which happen to be strong in them. But such people are exceptional, most individuals having a desire to do and be right. The great difficulty facing the average person of to-day is to know what is right. With the old standards proved inadequate, and all fixed moral codes, whether old or new, increasingly discredited, he

has no assurance that anything he does is just the thing he ought to do, and he feels perplexed and uncertain, allowing himself to drift with current practice and convention far more than he himself approves.

But there does exist a basis of morality, definite enough for practical purposes and wholly sound according to the modern view. Men of prophetic mind have used it long before the present age, for it has really been the only sound basis for morality since the time that man became human. To found one's judgments of right and wrong on this basis, however, takes considerable intelligence, that being the reason, no doubt, why the rank and file of humanity have been unwilling to rely upon it and why there still are many who doubt its sufficiency to-day. The basis I refer to is human need. According to this criterion, all that serves human need is right and all else is wrong.

While the principle is easily stated, the application is somewhat difficult. In the first place, the requirements of human need must be determined in every situation that arises. And human need is rather a complicated matter, it being necessary to consider the whole need of the individual, both physical and spiritual, as well as the need of his family, his neighbors, his community, and, to some extent, the need of the entire human race. That, in itself, calls for considerable breadth of knowledge and discrimination in judgment. Then, in the second place, it is necessary to determine what course of action, in the particular instance, will best serve the need as conceived in its broad outlines.

There are few human acts which are absolutely wrong; that is, which fail to do some one some good in some way. But, among all the choices possible in any instance, there is one, and sometimes there are several, which will serve human need far better than any of the rest, and the choice must be made accordingly, or it can scarcely be called right. Here, again, a high degree of intelligence is called for. Notwithstanding the difficulties, however, the new Christianity places its sole reliance for working standards of morality on the basis we have here defined. Any other would be contrary to its genius.

As the general level of human understanding goes higher, the old line of division between saint and sinner, good and bad, saved and unsaved, tends to fade away, and all persons are looked upon as equally human, all more or less good and all more or less bad. This does not mean, of course, that all persons are equally commended or equally disapproved of: approval or disapproval is still based upon the merits of the particular case. In fact, we might say that now, for the first time in history, among the enlightened, at least, approval or disapproval is based *entirely* upon the merits of the particular case, and not upon any artificial distinctions such as church membership, supposed inclusion among the number of God's elect, or other ecclesiastical invention. The Church, long regarded as an asylum of refuge from a wicked world and the wrath of a jealous God, is now popularly regarded as a man-made instrument to influence and aid the world

to more righteous living, and the lives of its members are scrutinized more critically rather than less so because of their membership. The world of to-day expects the Christian to justify his superior pretensions by a higher type of conduct than is found elsewhere. This new attitude is entirely wholesome in its effect, tending toward the elimination of Pharisaic pride and toward the realization of a sane humility and a fruitful brotherliness toward other and possibly less favorably situated individuals.

With the distinction between saint and sinner has also gone the distinction between religious activities and secular activities. Prayer, Bible-reading, the singing of hymns, church attendance, participation in the sacraments, almsgiving, and the like, were formerly considered as religious activities, specially acceptable in the sight of God and far more worth while, from the spiritual angle, than anything one might do in the course of one's secular activities, economic, political, social, or what not else. It is now generally acceded that any kind of activity is religious if backed by a religious motive, and that the so-called sacred activities may be empty of all religious value whatsoever, or of any other value, if the spirit back of them is wrong. The modern emphasis is therefore less and less on the traditional modes of religious expression, and more and more upon direct application of the principles and motives of one's religion to the problems and situations of everyday life. The traditional forms of worship are still allowed, and, in some cases, recommended, but,

unless they serve their true purpose of bettering the everyday life of the worshipers, they are compelled to face the general condemnation.

Viewing the religious change as a whole, one may sum it up as a transference of interest from what was conceived of as existing outside of and independently of man, to man himself, his nature, his need and his possibilities, as they exist in the life that he is now living and as they may be made the basis for his more complete self-realization in the present life.

CHAPTER III

THE IDEA OF GOD

THE revolution in Christianity may accordingly be spoken of as a victory for man, vindicating his dignity and granting him the freedom of self-determination. It has placed man in the center of his own field of vision. Henceforth we may expect him to make rapid progress in his own self-improvement, being hindered no longer by irrelevant considerations. The full significance of this fact will be considered, at some length, in later chapters.

Meanwhile, what has become of the idea of God? The thought of a Power or Powers mightier than man, exercising strong influence, whether for good or for ill, in the making of his destiny, but invisible to his eye and imperceptible to any of his senses, has, in the past, been a large factor in the molding of his career and in the making of all culture and civilization. Has this thought become unnecessary? Or has modern study proved it to be based on error, a figment of the imagination, without foundation in the realm of hard fact? Or, if there is a foundation, is that basis so soulless and mechanical that the word God is a misnomer and must be dropped for truth's sake? These are questions which occupy the minds of many.

First, let us take up the question whether the existence of God has been disproved. Modern scientific study has not succeeded in discovering God. On the contrary, it has shown distinctly that many phenomena which formerly used to be looked upon as direct manifestations of a divine being are due to natural causes and easily to be explained in terms of natural law. In its analytic investigation, step by step, of the entire complex of visible and tangible phenomena coming within the experience of man, it has found nothing which it could not refer to what seem to be fully ascertainable natural antecedents. This result, to many minds, is equivalent to crowding God out of the Universe. There does, indeed, seem to be a power back of all things, but, according to the results of scientific study, it would appear to be a highly impersonal, almost mechanical power, fully definable in terms of natural law.

So far, then, the results are discouraging, for, if there be nothing else than this, man must content himself as the product and plaything of forces less than human, soulless, purposeless and entirely without pity or meaning. However, it has never been shown that what science can reveal is all there is. The revelations of science are limited to what can be revealed by the particular methods which the scientific investigator employs. In other words, all the results of science represent investigations from one viewpoint only. They may be correct, or approximately correct, from that viewpoint, and yet form a very slim foundation for the

construction of an entire philosophy. For there are many viewpoints known to man's experience.

Wrapped up in the observation and measurement of details in the complex of tangible phenomena, the tendency of the scientist is to forget that what he discovers explains nothing, that it merely tells him what *is*, so far as his senses can determine that, and nothing whatever as to *why* it is or what ultimate purpose or end it serves. He is in the position of a man looking at an elaborate machine, of whose maker, operator or purpose he has no knowledge whatsoever. In such a case, the machine may be described with some accuracy and its mode of operation observed, but that will be far from explaining the machine or from ruling out the idea of a maker and operator of the machine. And the fact that, as the result of his scientific study, he cannot see any purpose in the contrivance does not prove that there is no such purpose.

This argument is given merely to show that no scientific studies, however far advanced, can disprove the existence of God—or prove it, for that matter. But the question may be approached from other and more fruitful angles. There is something with which we have far more intimate acquaintance than we have with the facts of science, and that is—the human soul. Our knowledge of the soul is immediate and vital, and does not depend on the more or less accurate observation of external phenomena. The soul as we know it from experience has needs just as pressing, if not always as definite, as those of the body. Some of these needs are

moral, expressing themselves in the desire to be right and good and commendable as measured by standards supposed to be inherent in the nature of things. Some of these needs are social, expressing themselves in the desire for fellowship and complete understanding between soul and soul and for the give and take of love. Some of them are creative, showing themselves in the desire to shape invisible, spiritual ideas into visible, tangible forms. Some of them are æsthetic, seeking and enjoying beauty; some of them are intellectual, or truth-seeking; some of them are prophetic, shaping man's ideals, and some, religious, making for faithfulness to ideals. That all these needs and the noble results which, time and again, have sprung from them should have their sole origin in a soulless, mechanistic force is incredible. Given the single-celled speck of living protoplasm, the biologist can deduce all the wealth and variety of animal and plant life on the earth, for the guiding principles are the same, from the lowest forms to the highest, in all physical life, only the mechanisms of the life-processes and of adjustment to environment varying from species to species. But the guiding principles in man, whenever he is at his best, are of another order entirely, not to be found anywhere in the visible universe outside of man, and in no way deducible from the properties of the original protoplasm. There is much in human life which the physicist's divinity of atoms and electrons cannot account for, even if it could account for physical life, which is doubtful.

Without the idea of a God, and, at that, a God of a very high order of spiritual attainment and excellence, the existence of man would stand unexplained, an anomaly entirely without foundation in reality. It is evident, then, that the existence of God, far from being disproved, is a proposition favored by the facts. However, the strongest proof of the existence of God is man's need of him.

Man is a God-ward looking creature. In their earlier attempts in that direction, men's ideas of God were quite unworthy of him, bearing still too much of the stamp of the baser earth from which the men themselves had sprung, but the ideas, at least, were there. It was a beginning. All of man's spiritual achievements have risen from crude beginnings, the transition from animal life to the life of the spirit not being possible in a moment. The full significance of many of man's endeavors was not revealed until comparatively high levels of achievement had been reached in them, the endeavors, up to that point, having been a hindrance to life rather than a help. The religion of the past has certainly often been such a hindrance. Nevertheless, men continued religious, just as they persisted in others of their endeavors which seemed to remain unfruitful, save in pain and dissatisfaction. The underlying urge was stronger than the selective process, of which our biologist-philosophers make so much. Religion after religion was born, modified and discarded again. It was the idea of God that persisted, not any particular form of that idea, and it did persist because

men could not do without it. One may doubt whether even to-day a finally satisfactory conception of the Deity can be reached; but, meanwhile, men have to live, and such conceptions as they have must be made to serve. For the thought of God has been more to man than so much philosophy: it has been the basis, to a very large degree, of his entire spiritual life, supplying him with courage to face enormous tasks, with endurance in the presence of hardships and difficulties apparently out of all proportion to his strength, and with inspiration which led him to outdo his own previous achievement again and again. Man has sought God because he needed God to make possible the full-orbed, creative kind of being to which human life aspires.

As the presence of the eye in man or animal presupposes light, so the presence of the God-ward trend in human life presupposes God. The urges of life, whether spiritual or physical, are all directed toward what is, or, in case the unrealized is needed, toward what is possible, and never toward what is not, or what is not possible. All faith, where it is soundly based, and not merely on some passing whim, is grounded in human nature, and that has its foundations in existing reality as a whole.

If man has needed the idea of God hitherto in order to bring out the full possibilities of his being, might it be said, with any measure of probability, that he has now outgrown that need, that he has reached his spiritual majority and is able to proceed about his affairs without the consciousness of divine backing?

The present age is strikingly like a youth in his middle teens: it is characterized by an exaggerated sense of its own wisdom and importance and by contempt for its predecessors. Otherwise this question would never have been asked. The last hundred years have indeed seen great change in many things, much knowledge has been added to man, and his outlook has broadened, but, while his mental stock has thus grown and his institutions have been revolutionized, there has been no corresponding spiritual growth or revolution. Men do not have stronger characters now than they had formerly, they are not better friends, artists, prophets, disciples, teachers, parents or citizens than were their ancestors. The civilized part of the human race has no more reached its spiritual majority to-day than it had a hundred years ago.

Sophistication is no guarantee to right and fruitful living. It may lead to suicide. Unless accompanied by strong spiritual growth, it is almost certain to lead to moral suicide, the disastrous casting aside of all moral standards which seems to be "the thing" in certain circles of society to-day, and to cynicism, which is spiritual suicide. Whether, on top of it all, the body is made away with or not, does not matter much. Human life, to be fruitful, effective and satisfying from first to last, needs the consciousness of a worth-while place in the universe, of a mission whose performance or non-performance will make a difference throughout all eternity, and of a backing, resident in the scheme of things, which will support and make fruitful all its

efforts in the direction of the right. Take away from man his faith in God and all that it implies, and you take away this consciousness, leaving his life meaningless. Reënforce that faith, and you make a better man of him.

However, though the existence of God has not been disproved, nor faith in God rendered unnecessary, the idea of God has been greatly modified in recent times. In the days before the development of exact science, God was thought of as engaging in activities and as employing methods which the larger knowledge of to-day would laugh at. Physical manifestations of God, except through processes which can be formulated as natural law, are discredited. Even in matters spiritual, God is thought of as acting in accordance with definite laws, different from those of the natural sphere and still but poorly understood by man. The idea of a capricious God, changing his mind from time to time, and interfering here and there in the established order of things in order to satisfy his wrath or favoritism or pity, has disappeared from the modern view. The full implications of the idea that, from man's viewpoint, God is "the same yesterday, to-day and forever" have at last been accepted. Nor is the Deity thought of as existing apart from the universe and man and as more or less in opposition to them, but rather as acting through them.

The transition to the humanistic outlook, spoken of in the last chapter, gave rise to considerable modifications in views concerning the character of God and his

purpose and method with man. It is now understood that the only clew we can have to the character of God is in the best that we can find in man, who, in a faint and very imperfect manner, reflects the image of his Creator. That God could manifest characteristics lower than the highest spiritual achievements of man has become inconceivable. The Christian of to-day no longer trembles before an unreasonable tyrant-divinity, which expects him to be what he is not and to do what he cannot do in order to satisfy its own whim, for that would make God baser than himself. To his mind, exactly the thing which he, in his better moments, longs for, the full realization of the spiritual possibilities within him, is what God expects of him. Indeed, that longing he recognizes as the voice of God within him—that longing, and the power to transform it into progressive realization, are all the direct gifts from God that he looks for, unless we except the benefits of immediate, mystic fellowship with the Divinity, concerning the possibility of which there is still some doubt. The actual task of self-realization, according to the modern view, is left entirely to man.

Keeping in mind these various modifications and limitations, how may the modern idea of God be formulated? In attempting to answer this question, we run into new difficulties. There is difference of opinion even among the devout. Extreme humanists would maintain that God is completely wrapped up in the Universe as we know it, and that he has no consciousness or purpose apart from man. This would put man at

the very apex of reality—a situation very flattering to man, but affording cold comfort, considering the responsibilities involved. Extreme theists, on the other hand, would make of God merely an enlarged and perfected edition of man (that is, the spiritual side of man), and conceive him as managing the Universe, humanity included, somewhat as a benevolent despot might manage an empire. This idea is rather naïve, and difficult to maintain in the full light of modern knowledge. The most satisfactory conception of God probably lies somewhere between these two extremes.

In finding our way to such a conception, we may, I think, begin with the assumption that God is the supreme, universally present Power underlying all things, that all discoverable laws, whether natural or spiritual, seemingly present in the Universe, represent modes of work or self-manifestation which God employs. Man's philosophic studies almost compel him to this view, for the Universe, in all its variety, is a unified complex, its parts harmonious and orderly, its laws persistent and universal. There is no chaos. To the thought that God is the all-controlling Power in the Universe, we should, it seems to me, add that it is a power that knows what it is doing, and that the masculine pronoun is not out of place when speaking of it. There is too much purpose manifest in the world—in the procession of evolution in the physical world, in the slow rise of man through the ages of history, in the gradual emergence of useful and effective spiritual qualities after many generations of persistent experiment—

there is too much purpose evident in all this to attribute it to the actions and reactions between blind and unconscious forces entirely. It is therefore fully admissible to think of God as a conscious, purposeful Power, all-pervading, which we may rightly address as we would a fellow human being.

However, it would be a mistake to think of God as like a human being. Men, even the best of the race, are too limited in their spiritual attainments, too narrow and prejudiced in their outlook, too strongly bound to the lower order of life by their physical inheritance and dependence, to serve as a standard by which to mold our idea of the Supreme Being. The very virtues that we find in man are, many of them, petty virtues, of service, indeed, to finite beings living for a brief time in a finite society, but altogether out of place in a God of the Universe. Reflecting on what personality always includes and implies when we speak of it as referring to human beings, it becomes plain that great caution must be used in applying the word as descriptive of Deity. Human personalities are much that God could not possibly be, and God is much that human personalities are not. To hold up any particular human individual, no matter how wise or good, as, for example, Jesus, and maintain that, in him, God stands fully revealed, or even that, in him, God has come to live as a man upon earth, is to have a very limited and unworthy idea of God. God is too vast and superior a being, on too high a plane of spiritual perfection, too broad and inclusive in the scope of his activities, too

profound and too wise and too powerful, for even a reduced picture of him to be contained within the bounds of any human being.

But, so much said, man may still claim that, in some ways, he is like God. When the enthusiastic disciples proclaimed Jesus as the Son of God, they did so because they had found in him qualities and powers which seemed to them more than human. But there are in all men, and outstandingly so in men of uncommon attainments in the art of living, qualities and powers which, when fully manifested, seem more than human. They are evidences of the presence of the spiritual, the link which ties man to God in a manner more immediate and direct than that which has fallen to the lot of any other of earth's creatures. In so far as man is spiritual, that far is he akin to God and like him, and that far can he come to a true understanding of God. Man is the only creature on earth that can understand God at all, or even form an idea about him. But too much must not be presumed on the extent of this understanding, for man's spiritual attainments are still meager and of a low grade. It is enough for him to know that, by cultivating the highest that is in him, he is making progress God-ward.

Full and definite knowledge about God, even if it were available, would, to man, be incomprehensible. Probably such knowledge is available, for God is constantly present everywhere and in all things: it is only because man cannot understand that he does not know.

However, there are a few things about God that man may know. One of them is that God is interested in man—specially interested in man.

Apart from any intuition which man may have of this interest, the facts pointing to it are plain. The rule is for the Universe to be merciful to its living creatures; that is, life generally is pleasant, enjoyable, and not attended by too much pain. It is true that nature has been painted as "red in tooth and claw," and that fear and pain are said to predominate in it; but such estimates must be discounted as coming from sentimentalists blessed with a strong imagination. No doubt, for highly civilized human beings to live under the conditions faced by the creatures of the wild would be intolerable, but that is another matter. Keenly observant naturalists, approaching their fields with unprejudiced minds, are in agreement on the point that wild animals enjoy life to the full while they are at it, that they are burdened neither with regrets for the past nor with fears for the future, that their experience of actual fear is brief and soon forgotten, that long-drawn-out suffering is rare and seldom acute, and that death usually is quick. Nature has an effective balm for all the wounds it causes, and it leaves plenty of room for all of its creatures to enjoy the sweetness of life. That is the rule; but man's case is an exception to the rule.

Man has known what it is to suffer, acutely, continuously and for long periods of time. It has been his unhappy lot to increase his own suffering and to add to

the misery of his kind. His restlessness, his ambition, his lust for possessions and power, have acted as an ever-renewed blight on human joy. His experiments in religion and state-craft and in the art of living have been the source of unrelieved pain and anguish to untold millions. The growth of his imagination and mental sensibility has multiplied the evil of his suffering manifold. And why all this discrimination against man? God, as manifest in the Universe, is not given to discrimination—unless it is to a special constructive purpose. The conclusion is clear: the discrimination in the case of man is not against him, but in his favor. Greater things are in store for man than for the rest of creation, and therefore the usual mercy of nature is, in his case, as far as necessary suspended. A creature comfortable and satisfied will stay where it is; only the persistently uncomfortable or dissatisfied will stir themselves to progress. That is, if they can; otherwise they will, in time, disappear.

But man has not only experienced the discomfort and restlessness which makes for progress, he has also had the necessary power. He could and did lift himself out of the animalism which had formerly bound him. To-day the process is by no means complete, but enough has been achieved to indicate that his pain has not been for nothing, that he has been favored beyond all others of earth's creatures. The actual quality of life he has achieved, especially in his most advanced representatives, the vastly enlarged power that has been placed in his hand, the variety and the scope of it—these are

proof positive of the favor man has received. Such favor is evidence of intense special interest in man on the part of the Creator.

While to the superficial view, the material advantage of man is the outstanding thing in his preëminence, a more careful examination will reveal a still more astonishing and significant fact. Man, in his rise, has come to know and make his first experiments in an entirely new kind of life, quite unknown to the rest of the animate world—the spiritual. He has thus been introduced into a new sphere of reality, the possibilities and promise of which, so far as man is concerned, are limitless. The wonder is not that his progress in it is comparatively slow, but that he is in it at all. Surely God is interested in man to favor him thus!

The nature of the interest also is manifest. It is not in further physical perfection. The dominant urge in man is not physical: there is noticeable in him a constant tendency to neglect his body in favor of higher needs. Merely to keep his body in its present status and in a reasonably healthy condition has become for him a matter of serious concern. Tendencies to physical degeneracy must be actively combated. This indicates that the trend of evolution lies in another sphere now, for evolution there is certainly taking place, and with a rapidity unknown in the previous ages of biological development. The evolutionary process is now at work on the spiritual, and on whatever other developments may be necessary to serve as a background for spiritual growth. There can, accordingly, be no question but

that the special interest of God in man is an interest in his spiritual development.

All this knowledge of God, revealing him as the all-pervading, all-controlling Power in the Universe, conscious and purposeful and superior to anything that man knows, but, nevertheless, specially interested in and favorable to man, and actively at work promoting man's spiritual growth and making possible the progressive realization in man of limitless possibilities—this knowledge is significant and vital to all of us humans. It provides us with that consciousness of a definite and worthy place in the Universe, of a mission that will call out our best, and of a moral backing sufficient for the greatness of our enterprise, which we need in order to live courageously and well as the children of promise which human beings have become.

CHAPTER IV

THE VALIDITY OF PRAYER

THE encroachment of the scientific viewpoint upon ground which, in times past, fell exclusively within the domain of religion has worked sad havoc with many of the practices as well as the beliefs of religion. One of the practices which has thus suffered is that of prayer. Definitely worded, audible prayer was a part of the every-day routine of the Christian life and was looked upon as an absolute necessity to such a life. No public meeting was regarded as committed to the Christian cause unless formally opened with prayer. To the popular mind, the good man and the praying man were one and the same person. If a praying man was found who could not, by any assistance of the imagination or mercy in judgment, be called good, his praying was set down as a pretence and the man himself as a hypocrite. The idea of the importance of prayer did not suffer.

All this has changed. Prayer has fallen into disuse, even among the pious. There are few homes in which it is heard, unless it be in the nursery, when the children are put to bed, or, in a perfunctory manner, at the table. Private, personal prayer, if we think of it as in the old-time formal, definitely worded manner, is rare. The churches have, for the most part, retained the practice

of praying in their public meetings, but more as a concession to custom than because vital need for it is felt. The change cannot, of course, be justly attributed to one single cause, but there can be no doubt that the chief reason for the neglect is a general impression that the practice is useless. The educated classes are almost unanimous in this attitude.

The man of to-day has come to realize that the things he wants can, as a general thing, be obtained in two ways only—one is through his own direct efforts, and the other, through the coöperative efforts of human society, in the making of which he has a share. The satisfaction of wants is a matter between man and his environment, or between man and man. Divinity does not enter into it; or, at least, to the modern mind, it does not seem to. But prayer, as most people in past times understood it, consisted in asking God for the things they wanted. Why pray, thinks the man of to-day, when we know that the only way we can get what we want is to get it for ourselves, or to induce society to give it to us?

The changing idea of God has had its influence on men's attitude to prayer. So long as people thought of God as a big, fatherly sort of a man, constantly interfering in the established order of things in order to reward his favorites or to punish individuals he did not like, that long the practice of prayer was zealously pursued. People wanted to be on the safe side. When, however, the notion began to spread that God had no favorites, that the affairs of the Universe were man-

aged in strict accord with unchangeable law, that Providence, in the popular understanding of the term, did not exist, then prayer began to languish. It was supposed that to pray or not to pray made not the least difference, that the course of things would follow its own trend in either case. And, further, it was thought presumptuous on the part of man to try to tell God how the Universe, or any part of it, ought to be managed. It was as if an apprentice of one day's standing gave orders to the master-builder as to how to conduct his job.

There can be no question that many forms of prayer, once freely indulged in by even the best of men, are pernicious in spirit and effect. To pray for the physical necessities of life, for physical comfort or power or health, is but one more way of dulling one's all too dormant sense of responsibility in these matters. To pray against accident and the natural operation of the forces of nature is to flout the science which has been trying to show how accidents and catastrophes may be avoided or minimized and how the forces of nature may be made to work for man's benefit. To pray for social amelioration is merely to shift the burden from man's own shoulders, where it belongs, to God, and thus to delay the very thing prayed for. To pray for other people, whether for their comfort or their improvement, is, at best, an easy way of taking care of one's social responsibilities, and, at worst, a despicable meddling in other people's affairs, none the less reprehensible even though, as a general thing, it is harmless. If the mod-

ern Christian is to admit the legitimacy of prayer at all, he must insist on an ethics of prayer that will discountenance the multitude of unwholesome moods and petitions which flourished in the practice of less critical ages.

When all this has been said, however, there remains a tremendous weight of evidence in favor of the practice of prayer as it has been pursued in the past. It is true that not all praying persons were benefited thereby, and that, as we may assume, none of them were bettered by every one of their prayers, but the evidence is strong that, time after time, bad men became good through the practice, and good men, in the same way, lifted themselves to higher levels of spiritual attainment. While prayer in its cruder forms may still further degrade the person making the petition, for thousands of years past there have been individuals who knew how to use the higher forms to lift themselves to superior levels of being and achievement or to maintain themselves upon such levels after having attained them. They found in prayer a source of power, helping them to reach heights to which their inner being aspired and which they could not reach without it.

In other words, the practice of prayer, pursued with due discrimination, has proved its worth to man by the actual results it has produced. There is room, of course, for the skeptic to ask whether it was the prayer that produced the results or whether it was not rather the mood of the man who did the praying? Would not the man, had he been able to raise himself to the same

mood by reciting the multiplication table, been able to accomplish the same results by thus resorting to the bugbear of his schooldays? This question raises two others.

One of them is, What is prayer? Is it so many words said or thought, or is it the mood which produces them? To ask this question, in our day, is to answer it. If it is genuine, the words of a prayer are merely the more or less inadequate expression of the praying soul's aspiration. The aspiration may, indeed, not be expressed in words at all, and still be prayer in the full sense of the word. If a prayer is not genuine; that is, if there is no aspiration back of the words as they are said or thought: then it remains empty and meaningless, a lifeless form, not a prayer. Prayer may seek to find itself, to make itself more definite and mentally comprehensible, by the use of words, but it is not the words.

The other question is, Is prayer merely a mental and spiritual exercise on the part of the praying man, a form of self-development, or may we rightly suppose that it brings about a response from some higher spiritual Power, that is, from God, and that it thus serves as a means of tapping spiritual resources which man, unaided, could never reach? This question really is the heart of the matter. Nor is it an easy one to answer, for here we are altogether out of the domain of the provable, having to content ourselves with whatever hypothesis may seem to us philosophically most tenable and practically most useful.

There certainly is no proof available to show that

man does not receive as well as give in prayer. The strange, uplifting power that sincere prayer has had in human lives points quite to the contrary. In many cases, the effects of the practice have been permanently noticeable, the radically changed and improved character, the vastly increased measure of sound understanding and the increased capacity for substantial achievement being a matter of comment even among the unreligious. This, indeed, has been one of the outstanding attractions of Christianity to individuals who had previously given it little thought—the strange power for the achievement of righteousness which the religion has given to such as have taken it seriously. Prayer has again and again raised men to heights of moral ability which, by their own confession, they were unable to attain without it. On the surface of things, then, it would look as though prayer actually did serve as a means of access to spiritual resources greater than man's.

Now let us look at the matter from a somewhat broader angle. If we are correct in supposing that, in man, the work of creation has taken a new trend—that is, toward the creation of the spiritual—then it is fair to ask, how is the making of this new element in life or this new kind of life accomplished? Surely it is not born with the physical birth of the individual. Physical transmission is possible only in the case of physical traits, and can have to do only with modifications in the actual cell structure of the individual. Above the physical heritage stands the social heritage of man, a far

greater factor in determining the final form and content of a person's life than is his physical heritage. None of this is transmitted to the individual until after he has been born and takes his place in human society. The transmission takes place through the action of external influences working on the individual through his mind. The process, though it has been studied extensively, is not yet fully understood. It is established, however, that no individual can make progress in assimilating the social heritage faster than his own inner preparations warrant. That is, for each further step in that assimilation a certain amount of inner growth or development is necessary. The question which arises at this point is whether the previous social stimulus and the physical basis of life are enough to account for that inner growth or development, or whether a new factor has come into life at that point. If there is such a new factor, it is entirely spiritual, and may be thought of as God imparting himself to man.

That there is such a new factor entering into the development of human life is indicated by strong evidence. If all the ends that man strives for were physical—physical satisfaction, physical comfort and well-being, physical growth and reproduction—as is the case in the animal, then the physical basis, plus the outside stimuli of environment and society, would be enough to account for everything, no matter to what heights of ingenuity man might attain. But human ends are of two distinct classes, which are different not merely in degree, but in kind. Aside from physical

ends, which man pursues as much as the animal, there are those we call spiritual. From these there arise a group of values of which there is not even a suggestion in the physical ends which suffice for the animal. They belong to another plane of being, and the animal lives out its life, from first to last, without being in the least aware of their existence. Now we may ask, how was it that any human being ever came to appreciate these values; how is it that some individuals are so much more sensitive to them than others; how is it that no one can be taught such appreciation, but that, in each case, its appearance has to be from within? Mental development and capacity have undoubtedly something to do with it, but not as much as is sometimes thought. Mental culture does not make better men; it makes more capable men, that is all. There are highly intellectual persons who live the life of a brute, entirely wrapped up in physical ends, and knowing no scale of values save the physical. It would seem that, where the spiritual has come into human life, we are dealing with an entirely new element, not elsewhere present in the Universe as we know it, and therefore not latent in physical life as such. Whence does it come, if not from the Creator directly, when and in the measure that the creature is ready to receive it?

Having come to this point, the real function of prayer in human life ought to be clear. The genesis and growth of the spiritual in the individual may be, and for the most part is, an unconscious process; but, after a certain stage of growth has been attained, the process

may be accelerated by the individual himself through practices which he has found useful to that end. One such practice is prayer.

According to this view, prayer is an attitude toward the spiritual analogous to the attitude of teachableness, or willingness to learn, toward the social heritage. Just as a person cannot escape assimilating some of the social heritage even though he refuses to go to school or to make any effort to learn anything, so also, if he lives in a spiritually stimulating environment, can be hardly escape developing some of the spiritual element in his life, even though he does not pray. But as there is a vast difference in the ultimate social efficiency of the willing learner as compared with that of the one who refuses to make any effort at learning, so also is there a difference between the ultimate spiritual attainments of the praying man and those of the man who does not pray. In prayer, then, humanity has a resource which it cannot afford to disregard.

But, in our day, a right understanding of what prayer is, is as important as the practice of prayer itself. There lingers too much of the old notion that, in order to pray, one must stand up or kneel down or assume some other traditional attitude, close his eyes, and address God, preferably in the artificial stilted phraseology which centuries of use have associated with the idea of worship. Nothing could be more incongruous in present-day life. Everything about the traditional forms of prayer, the posture, the language, many of the ideas even, is directly traceable back to primitive,

pagan practice, and represents Stone Age ideas of the proper method in which man should approach divinity. It is significant that we find no hint of such practice in the accounts of the life and teaching of the founder of Christianity, as they have come to us from the early times. Jesus' recorded prayers are brief, worded in Jesus' own every-day language, and evidently, in each case, the natural expression of what was uppermost in his mind at the time. It would seem that, in his prayers, there was no pose nor any attempt at generating an artificial atmosphere. Christian practice since Jesus' day, however, has tended in the opposite direction.

In the matter of praying, then, Christians have not followed their professed leader, but adopted the practices of paganism and Judaism. It is small wonder that, under the glare of modern critical intelligence, prayer itself has fallen into disrepute. To rescue it from this disgrace and restore it to its proper influence in human life and affairs, the practice must be stripped of all its traditional trappings and followed in its unadorned simplicity. That is, the essence of prayer can and should be retained, but it must be that essence unhampered by outgrown ideas and habits, formerly associated with it.

What is the essence of prayer? Expressed crudely, it undoubtedly is a consciousness of desire, an asking; for the praying man is always an unsatisfied man. It is the something lacking in his life that gives rise to the prayer. To the modern way of thinking, however, not all human need or desire is legitimate as a basis for

prayer: most of it, in fact, is not, but should, rather, serve as the starting point for effort. The sole sphere in which prayer can have any meaning to the modern mind is the sphere of the spiritual. Spiritual good cannot be attained in the same direct, definitely planned manner in which men satisfy their material desires. It is hardly possible, by taking thought and working hard, to create such spiritual desirables as insight, inspiration, spiritual understanding, creative ability, moral power, wisdom. These things seem as elusive as the wind—they cannot be caught by direct effort, no matter how hard the striving; yet, on the other hand, there are times when they appear as easily and unexpectedly as does the sun when it breaks through on a cloudy day. It is the desire for spiritual good that gives rise to prayer, or rather, that *is* prayer.

To define prayer, then, merely as asking or desire is not enough. It is desire for spiritual realization or spiritual power, and that not merely in the form of a passing wish, the kind that is crowded from the field of consciousness by any new suggestion or idea that may come along, but rather as intense longing, filling and overpowering the whole being for the time. Such desire may be artificially stimulated and prolonged. It usually begins by the praying individual centering his thoughts on the best he knows, but even that is usually brought about by some external suggestion or stimulus—a symbol, a strain of music, a thought expressed in words, an act witnessed, almost anything. To maintain the high mood which follows, the flow of the indi-

vidual's own thoughts may be enough. Often, however, other aids are called to service. The individual may break forth into the speech of prayer, or he may follow the thought of another, whether by listening to the spoken word or by following the words in print. Devotional literature is of high value here, as also is poetry. The high mission of poetry as prayer literature has not yet been as fully recognized as it deserves to be. If it were, not an individual who aspires to make something more of his life than what is the natural lot of the mere creature of earth would allow himself to be without a volume of the best inspirational verse at his elbow. Music and art, certain bits of Nature, the church service, plays, books of fiction, lectures and sermons may, any of them, have a stimulating power similar to that of the spoken prayer or the exalted sentiments of the poem. No matter what the circumstances, or what the particular means of stimulation employed, when a soul thus loses itself in aspiration toward the higher levels of being, the finer realization and more worth-while power of the spiritual, toward the very Infinite itself, then it is engaged in prayer.

We may leave out the metaphysics of the question altogether; we may refuse to bother our heads with any attempt to decide whether there is an actual response on the part of God to the praying soul or whether the prayer is merely a form of spiritual exercise in which the praying soul alone is concerned: to determine the value of prayer, we need consider nothing other than the prayer itself, and the effect it produces in the life

of the man who prays. Individuals of high spiritual attainments, the men and the women who lift their race up along with themselves and who make the future of humanity glow with promise—such individuals have full acquaintance with prayer in the sense that I have here described. Many other individuals, who do not perhaps rank so high in humanity's scale, whose sphere, as the world sees it, is an humble one and whose circle of influence is small, but who nevertheless know golden moments which no physical satisfaction can account for and whose presence is prized by those who know them—such also have had intimate experience with prayer.

When we think of prayer in this manner, as the essence of the thing rather than the traditional dress which we have been taught to associate with it, the decay of the practice of prayer, spoken of at the beginning of the present chapter, may not seem to us as complete as we had first supposed. If real prayer consists of an entirely invisible and often totally unexpressed, even inexpressible, longing, artificially promoted and prolonged in any one of a thousand different ways, most of them never associated at all with the traditional idea of prayer, it is manifestly impossible to determine how much actual praying is being done, but it is evident that there must be a great deal, and that there always will be, so long as men retain the level of civilization they have reached or continue their efforts to reach something beyond it.

It will also be evident that the Christianity of to-day, no matter how self-sufficient it may become or how

impatient it may be with the methods and practices of the past, cannot afford to look upon prayer lightly or to neglect its cultivation as an effective means to further spiritual progress. No doubt the methods of such cultivation will be different, for the most part, from the methods of the past, and a larger range of stimuli will be brought into service, but the real end sought will still be the same as that striven for in the past. Prayer makes for spiritual growth: no one knows exactly how, but experience shows that it does. And spiritual growth is, for man, the one thing needful.

CHAPTER V

THE WORLD'S GREAT NEED

WE may now take up a question which lies at the bottom of all the questions which we shall study in this book, and with which, perhaps, we should have begun. Why have any religion at all? Always a fruitful source of perplexities, often of worse than perplexities, why should we bother with it at all? None of its postulates are absolutely provable; all of them, whether they are convictions regarding the worth and possibilities of man, or convictions regarding the nature and value of the right and the good, or convictions concerning God, or concerning prayer—all of them are ventures of faith. Why not content ourselves with what we know for certain, and devote ourselves entirely to making ourselves comfortable on that basis?

We do not do so because we cannot. Had the creature we call man never undertaken to wrestle with the unknowable, had he never made any ventures of faith, he would not be man to-day—he would be nothing more than an anthropoid ape. But the matter was not left for him to decide: to make the ventures we speak of was the necessity of his being, as much as was the physical comfort that he sought. At every stage of

human evolution, no doubt, there have been individuals who did not care to go beyond the evidence of the senses. There are such to-day, some of them of no mean intellectual attainments. But such individuals are not truly representative of the human race. Other men look upon them as morally defective, as subhuman, if not perverted and blameworthy. The human kind, where it is normal, has to make its ventures of faith, and to regulate its life thereby.

All the vast cultural growth which we call religion, from its first beginnings to its highest forms as known at the present day, all the stupendous enterprises, the inhuman cruelties, the superhuman kindnesses, the unreasonable errors, the inspiring approaches to truth which it entailed—all this grew out of a great human need. The Phœnician mother sacrificing her first-born to Moloch, Jesus dying on the cross, Saint Francis giving up wealth and social standing for conscience' sake, the Athenians building the Parthenon, the medieval monk spending his days in fasting and prayer, Luther defying the Pope, the great ecclesiastical councils in session to adopt standards of faith or to condemn heretics, Jesuit missionaries taking their chances with the Indians through the hardships of a northern winter—all these, and countless other phenomena which we associate with the name of religion, grew out of the same great human need. The urge has ever been there, ever since man became human, and has again and again driven him to attempt what seemed to be impossible, enabling him also, in no few cases, to succeed in it.

But it has driven him also to many absurdities. The need was born in him, unaccompanied by either the mental ability or the knowledge required to satisfy it in any adequate or wholesome manner. These he had to gain for himself, step by step. It is not, then, surprising that his interpretations of the need within him were fantastic often, and sometimes disastrous. He had to learn by his failures, as much as by his successes. Whatever his mistakes or his failures, however, the need remained, and grew, and the pain of the lack remained with him to keep him striving.

The negative or indirect evidences of the great need are everywhere apparent. As we have seen in another chapter, the only creatures of earth which have much acquaintance with long-continued misery are human beings and such of the lower animals as man has contrived to make miserable. However, it is human beings that feel it the keenest. Contemplating the amount of suffering that is to be found in the world of men and women and children, most of it, as it would seem, entirely needless and useless, but imposed only because people have mistaken notions about things, one could almost persuade himself that there was a malignant demon at work in the world, bent on turning all joy into sorrow and all pleasure into pain. Such, indeed, was long the belief of Christians, who did not notice any inconsistency between that idea and the fact that, in the name of their God of righteousness, they practiced cruelties of their own. The truth is that the demon back of all, or nearly all, avoidable human suffering is

a good one, the same urge as that which drives men to noble and kindly deeds and to achievements which command the admiration of multitudes. Most of the world's pain is caused by men's blundering attempts to satisfy a deep-lying and persistent need, which is still all too poorly understood. The maladjustments, the problems of human society, however glibly they may be explained by economists, are evidence of the same fact. Economists may define them, political reformers may modify them, relieving the pressure at one place to settle it on another, but neither of these can entirely remove or solve them. Human need will not allow itself to be thwarted by the manipulation of experts. The finest schemes of the reformers thus are of small avail, frequently resulting in more mischief than the good they had been calculated to achieve. "Such is the perversity of human nature," or, shall we not rather say, such is the persistence of man's great need.

Observers who view the matter with some detachment are frequently heard to remark on the amount of energy that is being spent on material objectives. After all, it is said, what more can a man get out of his work than a living, the requirements of which are comparatively simple, and yet how men strive and slave and deny themselves to lay up a store of possessions for themselves! It was not the original nature of man thus to toil for the satisfaction of his material needs. The ape-man, ancestor of the human species, was not a toiler. He took what was at hand, and so lived out his

life in comparative ease. Many of his descendants do so yet. To work away consistently and steadily at some task requiring days and years for its completion is a hard-learned acquirement of man. To state that economic necessity made him learn the lesson is not to explain the fact, for man himself has been the creator of the larger part of this economic necessity. Even to-day, in any civilized land, if the people were content to return to the simple life, they could cut down the amount of work that needs to be done by at least half, and probably a great deal more. The harder and the more persistently people work, the more efficiently they work, the more they need to work, for economic necessity seems to become more exacting with each further achievement. The question remains, why do men do it; why do they not one and all rebel and return to a simpler and easier economy? The answer is not difficult, though it is usually overlooked. The unsatisfied human need, actively manifesting itself in at least some of the individuals of a modern social group, drives them to strenuous action, which frequently, in lieu of something better at hand, is directed toward the production of more material goods, or greater buildings, or larger industrial systems, and so on. The strenuous ones whip the more reluctant ones into line, and so the merry pace keeps up. Nine-tenths and more of the material products of modern civilization are quite unnecessary for adequate, civilized living, but that does not seem to make any difference. So long as there is nothing better in sight, material objectives must be multiplied, and two

jobs must be made to grow where one grew before, for the great human need will leave men no rest.

This need is enough to explain the intense struggle the more progressive-spirited of the human race engage in to gain for themselves higher standards of living, or knowledge, or wealth, or power. Other factors no doubt enter in, such factors as the biologist delights in tracing back to our animal ancestors and cousins, hoping thereby to show that man, after all, is nothing much more than a bear or a bull or a pig or a monkey. Be that as it may, when all is said, man remains the only one of earth's creatures who allows the things mentioned to give him much concern. There is something the lower animals do not know, which drives him to these pursuits. They may not, in the end, satisfy the underlying need which caused them—in many cases do not—but they serve as an outlet for the questing spirit meanwhile. They are the best that he knows to apply himself to, and he does so with great energy, hoping that the need which he feels within him but which he can scarcely define may thus be satisfied.

Evidence of the need is to be seen in man's idealizing tendency. Ever since the days of Plato, and probably before that, men have soothed their hidden longings by fabricating Utopias, ideal societies perfected by the imagination in accordance with the highest standards their makers, in each case, could conceive of. While this was the sport of philosophers, the commoner sort of men found consolation in dreams of the Paradise that was to be their lot in the world to come. But the

idealizing tendency found expression also in men's thoughts of existing things. Great leaders and prominent individuals were idealized until, in the popular mind, they were as gods walking upon the earth. Established institutions, such as the Christian Church or the kingship or the body of Roman Law, and even certain literature, such as the Bible, the writings of the Church Fathers and the philosophic works of Aristotle, came to be invested with a halo of infallibility and were considered as sacred, unchangeable, the last word in their respective spheres, handed directly down from heaven. The supreme example of idealization is to be seen in men's conceptions of God, which have always been a synthesis of the highest and most ideal notions that men were capable of at the time. The idealizing tendency in man is a unique thing among living creatures, showing a need which keeps him continually dissatisfied with things as they are, and makes him believe in the existence or possibility of that which is better.

The nature of the need is more directly indicated by certain specific desires which have played a large part in the affairs of mankind. These include such as the desire to see that justice is done, the desire to see that order is established, the desire for beauty and truth, as well as the dislike of their opposites, injustice, maladjustment, disorder, ugliness, error and ignorance. Part of such desire and distaste is no doubt due to selfish considerations, but considerations of that nature would hardly explain the breadth and intensity of the interest as it is manifested in many individuals. Persons who

devote their whole lives to strenuous effort in the direction of a more adequate justice in human affairs, or of a more complete realization of the beautiful in the human environment, or of a closer approach to the truth in human knowledge, often at the cost of considerable sacrifice to themselves, can scarcely be said to be moved by exclusively selfish ends. As a rule, they tend to forget self in the zealous pursuit of the ends they have in view. And such individuals are not a few in modern society. Moreover, what these individuals experience in great intensity and over long periods of time, the average person experiences also, though more mildly and not so persistently.

As a final and comprehensive evidence of the need that we speak of, we may mention the universally present personal restlessness and dissatisfaction on the part of individuals. Many individuals will confess that the one thing that makes life endurable for them is hope. They expect something better than they know now, and so they keep on. Hope is a large factor in all lives. Where hope is gone, it is very conspicuous by its absence, and the person who has lost it is in abject misery. The desire for "salvation," found in many of the historic religions, is far more than a fear of hell, as some modern thinkers would make it: it is the desire to realize a life better than the one the worshiper has known. In other words, it is the great human need making itself manifest.

Having enumerated some of the outstanding evidences of the presence of such a need in human life,

we may now proceed to a consideration of what that need actually consists in.

The need evidently is spiritual. Non-spiritual objectives are frequently pursued in the attempt to satisfy the need, but such attempts are usually unsuccessful, or, if they are partially successful, it is because they give incidental rise to spiritual activities which, in themselves, bring satisfaction. However, the direct pursuit of unmistakably spiritual objectives is by no means infrequent. And, as man advances in civilization and thus is better able to interpret the need which is driving him, it becomes more frequent. The accumulated experience of the race, as to what satisfies and what does not satisfy, and the intensity with which people cling to spiritual good, once they have attained it, all point to the real nature of the need. It is within the sphere of the spiritual alone that man can find the satisfaction which his being demands.

However, here is where we run against a difficulty. Careful study will reveal the fact that the spiritual life in man is distinct from the physical life, with its own needs, its own values, and its own methods, often in direct opposition to those of the physical life. But this distinctness is not commonly recognized. Or, if it is recognized, the notions with regard to it are vague to the extreme. The backwardness of even civilized man on this point is shown by the fact that the spiritual, as distinct from the physical, still lacks a proper vocabulary. In any discussion of it, one finds it necessary to press into service words which but poorly cover the

concepts intended and which are likely, because of their other associations, to suggest concepts of an entirely different and lower order in the mind of the hearer. It is hard even to talk about the spiritual in any satisfactory manner because of this. There has been no proper differentiation, in ordinary thinking, between manifestations of the spiritual life and manifestations of the physical life. Confusion of thought and consequent misdirected energies have been the inevitable result. A clearer notion of the spiritual is eminently desirable.

Philosophers of the long-distant past have given us a clew by associating the spiritual in man with the seeking of the good, the beautiful and the true. But it is a mistake to suppose that, from the spiritual standpoint, these are three separate and distinct things. To the spirit in man, what is good is also beautiful and true, what is beautiful is also good and true, and so on. The three are nothing other than aspects of the same thing. We may therefore say that the thing the spirit in man needs, the thing it grows on, the thing it works to produce, the thing it finds its joys in, the thing whose absence it notices with pain—in a word, the great human need we have been discussing—is the thing which has been variously and inadequately named, sometimes as the good, sometimes as the beautiful, and sometimes as the true.

Now the question arises, what, from the spiritual standpoint, *is* good, what *is* beautiful, what *is* true? That is one point where the vagueness of modern

thinking comes in. The meaning of each of the words has been so stretched as to include a vast range of concepts, some of the most opposite character, and there is no assurance that what the words mean to one person they will mean also to another. Frequently, indeed, they refer to physical, or animal, values, and not to spiritual values at all. As a general thing, however, the words actually do suggest spiritual values to people, but, as to their exact meaning, there is the greatest confusion.

And, since the three are after all but so many aspects of the same thing, we might as well drop them from our discussion at this point. If they have been of any service in suggesting the true nature of the spiritual need in man, they have served their purpose. A somewhat different approach may help us still further. Judging from man's numerous attempts in that direction, one of the things the human spirit needs is *harmony*.

Harmony may be defined as coördination so as to produce a spiritually desirable effect. Every man lives in relation. This relation is with his fellow men, with the visible universe, and with the spiritual universe, the heart and life of which we postulate as God. At any point, this relation may be either harmonious or otherwise. The needs of his spirit demand that conscious harmony should be achieved. Such harmony, wherever achieved, is both good and beautiful, and must be based on truth. Practically the entire body of the recorded teaching of Jesus seems to have been conceived with a view to achieving harmony. Moralists since Jesus' day

have directed their efforts largely to the same end. Artists have striven to depict it. Scientists have tried to reach it in their conclusions. Organizers, executives and social reformers have aimed to realize it in practice. Philosophers and mystics have pursued the same end in their own way. We may well say that the struggle after harmony is universal among the human kind.

Harmony, however, is by no means all that the human spirit needs. A prerequisite to harmony is *insight*, but this attainment has spiritual value on its own account also. To be able to understand and appreciate the soul of the other man, whoever he may be; to be able to understand and appreciate the visible universe and its laws; to be able to understand and appreciate spiritual values, spiritual realities and the Great Reality which is the source of them all: this implies insight, the greatest of man's gifts, though nowhere in man is it so great that he is not sorely in need of more of it. The joy which attends a new achievement in insight is beyond words. So much is this true that some philosophic souls are convinced that the end and aim of human life is to attain to ever more penetrating and far-reaching insight, with the constantly augmented joys which it brings.

But it seems to me that both harmony and insight, however valuable in themselves, are, in the main, preparatory to a third factor in the life of the spirit, and therefore in the spiritual need of man—that is, *creativity*. So far as we can understand God at all,

it would seem that he is realizing himself in creative activity, ever at work bringing into being that which did not exist before and which, to him or to any being like him, seems worth while. In man, also, the need for such self-realization in creative activity is strong. In the full sense of the word, he can find himself only in the process of shaping himself and his world, of bringing into being forms which, through physical means, express the spiritual insight which has become his. Like God his Father, man is a creator, though, of course, to a lower degree and in a more imperfect manner. Only as creator can man be fully and persistently happy. The source of his greatest sorrows and bitterest disappointments, as well as of his most serious problems, is the poverty and imperfection of his creativeness.

Harmony, insight and creativeness, then, are the things which the human spirit needs, and, when we speak of the world's great need, it is they that we have in mind. Incidentally, also, it is these things that, from the spiritual standpoint, are meant when we speak of the good, the beautiful and the true. In them, human life finds its meaning.

The race of man, however, was not born fully human. Ever since the beginning, it has been in the process of making. The first ape-man must have presented very unpromising material. He was just an animal—nothing more; and animals as we now know them, however interesting they may be, would not be regarded as offering any very promising field for the creation of spiritual beings. They are completely tied

by biological necessity. They know nothing of harmony, insight and creativeness, care nothing about them, and could not understand them, no matter how capable a teacher they might have. Man, at the beginning, was in a like state. His growth to his present state of spiritual comprehension and achievement was a long and tedious process. Readers who wish to familiarize themselves with that process are referred to the numerous treatises on anthropology and history which are now extant. The point I wish to make here is that the process is still far from complete. Man has progressed far enough so that he can no longer satisfy himself with a mere animal existence, but on the other hand, he has not gone far enough to attain true efficiency in the life of the spirit. His great need is the spiritual, but that need remains, in large part, unsatisfied.

Such an unsatisfied need is dangerous, and especially so since it has not, in any way, impaired man's physical powers. On the contrary, by stimulating him to inventions and enterprises of many sorts, it has greatly multiplied those powers. Though the growth of mind and its products has been attended by a spiritual growth, this has not, by any means, kept pace with the enlargement and perfection of the physical powers at man's command. The position of the race to-day is somewhat like that of a small infant given unlimited access to edge tools and explosives. The danger is that he might destroy himself before he attained sense enough to use his opportunities rightly.

The clearest example of this is the sinister possibilities which lie in modern warfare. Warfare always has been a destructive agency, but with each new invention, each increase in the mental ability of the combatants, its danger to human welfare and to civilization itself has increased, until to-day the whole of civilization is threatened with extinction at its hand. Warfare simply means unleashing the animal in man and giving it full control in human affairs, handing over for its exclusive use all the mental capacity and the accumulated cultural heritage which man, under the pressure of an unseen urge, has slowly gathered for other purposes. But the danger in other directions is no less great, even if less apparent. Democracy, a blessing attained only after an immense expenditure of effort, is proving itself a disappointing good because the people to whom it has come are not big enough, spiritually, to wield their power in a beneficial manner. Property, an institution of undoubted value in the promotion and exercise of the spiritual life, has become the master of men rather than their servant, since, in the degree to which it has now developed, it affords individuals and societies a larger source of power than their limited spirituality can use to good effect. The vast cities and the open lines of communication between all parts of the civilized world are a source of danger, for it takes a higher degree of spirituality to live in close contact with large masses of humanity in a mutually beneficial manner than it does to live in a small, comparatively isolated community. Universal education is not necessarily a

good thing, for it increases the individuals' power and range of action without, in many cases, a corresponding increase in spirituality. Religion itself may become a menace, where the general spirituality of the people is low, their devotion great and their leaders misguided or unscrupulous.

The modern world is multiplying problems because it is multiplying power faster than it is increasing the spirituality of the people in whose hands the power is placed. It is the function of religion and all religious activity to generate such spirituality, thus causing the problems to disappear or, at least, to become soluble. Of course, when we speak of religion in this way, we must think of it in a wide sense. It would include the sum total of all our attitudes toward the spiritual and of our activities therein. Christianity can scarcely be said to cover all of that broad field. Still, according to the modern view, it covers a good part of it, and, within its sphere, its services are indispensable.

Historic Christianity, it is necessary to say, was not always fully conscious of its true function in human life and society. There can be no question but that Jesus' aim was spiritual achievement exclusively. His aim was to get human beings to live as children of the Heavenly Father ought to live; that is, spiritually. But the later church became more of an "ark of safety" than a promoter of high levels of living. The latter task frequently became a mere incidental in its activities, and the institution which had been founded to promote the spiritual life in man became an instrument in

the hands of the animal in man, used for the achievement of animal ends. Modern Christianity, if it is to live, must renounce such base perversion of its opportunities.

In later chapters, we shall study some of the ways by which organized Christianity can serve its true purpose, how it can avoid some of its most serious dangers, and so make itself really effective in the service of man, thus contributing materially to the promotion of its original founder's objectives. For the present, it is enough to state that organized Christianity needs to be fully conscious of the fact that the world's great need is spiritual—the need, on the part of all people, of a better understanding and appreciation of insight, harmony and creativeness, and of a greater zeal in the pursuit of them—and of the fact that its sole business in the world is to help people make a more intelligent and direct approach to these values. Fortunately, many individuals, both within and outside of organized Christianity, have come to understand this clearly.

CHAPTER VI

THE HUMANISTIC OUTLOOK

So far, we have tried to show the abiding elements in Christianity, its essential objectives and its value for man. We have found that its abiding elements are as wide in their range as human interest, that its essential objectives remain unchanged, and that the religion's capacity to minister to human need has in no way abated. We have also pointed out the changes that have taken place in the religion, and have tried to show that these changes were both necessary and desirable. It has been our purpose to show that Christianity, in its new and changed form, is really more in accord with its essential genius, and more effective in the service of human need, than it was in any of its older, traditional forms. We emphasized the necessity, if Christianity is to be fully effective in this and future ages, for adherents of the religion to modernize their viewpoint throughout, to set the objectives of their religion clearly before them, and to put aside all irrelevancies, however time-honored and supposedly sacred any of them may be.

In the main, the five chapters we have so far covered represent a backward glance—a look over our resources

and a review of our purposes. We have found that the Christianity of to-day connects up well with the Christianity of the past, that it is not actually a new religion we have attained, nor a new religion that we need. The religion that we have to-day, and the religion that the world needs, is still the old Christianity. Yet it is not exactly the old Christianity, either, for in many ways it is different from the religion of our fathers. In religion, as in other things, the world has made progress. Let us say, then, that the religion of to-day is the old Christianity reborn.

We have now come to the point in our discussion, however, where we need to face forward altogether. The home base, so to speak, having been inspected and found in good condition, we are ready for the question, What is there ahead for Christianity, and how shall those who call themselves Christians face it? In order to be entirely in the clear in the treatment of this problem, it is necessary, at this point, to devote one chapter to the thought basis of the religion in its new form. We will call this thought basis *the humanistic outlook*.

The humanistic outlook, in its entirety, is built up around the idea of man. It is man that we know, man that we believe in, man that we judge by, man that we are willing to work for. What helps or satisfies man we shall call good, and what hurts or hinders him we shall call bad. We shall not allow ourselves to be scared by any of the bugbears of superstition or philosophy or any self-appointed authority whatsoever: faith in man will take precedence over everything, and

the service of man's need will be our one objective. Such is the humanistic outlook.

Now let us take up the viewpoint more in detail.

According to the humanistic outlook, man's purpose in the world is to realize the full possibilities of his own being. Those possibilities are thought of as being resident within him, and as manifesting themselves, in the first place, as needs. These needs are looked upon as the original incentives for all human effort. Man exists to satisfy them. He finds his entire joy in satisfying them, and all his pain and sorrow spring out of his failure in the same enterprise. What makes the problem complicated and difficult is the fact that human needs are so many and varied, some of them still ill-understood and without adequate provision for their satisfaction. Moreover, human needs have an odd way of growing with their satisfaction: supply one need with its requirements, and several more come budding forth, like in the case of the giant who grew two heads for every one that was cut off. Human possibilities being unlimited, the problem of satisfying man's needs is rather a complicated one.

However, in the solution of the problem, enthusiasts of the humanistic outlook have more to go by than the needs themselves. Man has been at the business of living for a considerable time, and some of his possibilities have already been realized, especially in the case of favored individuals and societies. Such cases will serve as object lessons, allowing human possibilities to be studied as partially realized fact. Of course,

it is not the nature of man, still less is it the nature of the humanistic outlook, to rest satisfied with any present or past achievement; but such achievement may well serve as a starting point for further attainments, and, in that way, can be of great value. Anything that can be made to serve human need will be assured full consideration on the part of the humanistic viewpoint.

In the contemplation of human possibilities and needs, the humanistic viewpoint manifests no favoritism. The possibilities and needs, whatever they are, are thought of, not as the possession of a favored few, or of any individual alone, but as the birthright of the entire human race, and as equally present and important in every normal individual in the race. Unequal rates of development are recognized, of course, and different treatments for different cases are as important in this view as in any; but, according to the humanistic outlook, human beings are at bottom the same, with the same basic needs, and the same ultimate possibilities. Further, according to that outlook, the full possibilities in any individual or group of individuals can be realized only as the people of all nations and classes approach the same desired end together. For one people to attempt to raise itself at the expense of another people, or one individual at the expense of other individuals, is thought of as short-sighted policy, working ultimately to the detriment of all concerned.

All questions of right and wrong are referred to human need and the requirements of human welfare. In determining such need and requirements, however,

the humanistic viewpoint demands that the whole man be considered, and not merely a select part of him, or some abstract conception of him. Further, all persons, whether now living or yet to be born, must be fully taken into account. A careful study of human need will reveal the fact that the requirements of human life lie upon different levels—physical, social and spiritual. For man to thrive continuously on any of these levels, he must thrive upon all of them. Moreover, as we have seen, for anyone to reach the highest possible type of well-being, it is necessary that all other persons are approaching that type also. No high type of well-being at all is possible apart from an environment made up, so far as the human element is concerned, of individuals who approach that type. Questions of right and wrong, therefore, do not concern the individual alone. They must be solved, in each case, with reference to the needs of all the individuals in his environment, and ultimately, with reference to the needs of all the individuals in the world. Besides, within the individual himself, all his needs must be considered—physical, social and spiritual—and not merely one particular set of them.

While the basic possibilities and needs of the human being are looked upon as the same in all individuals, it must be acknowledged that much of this will remain latent in many individuals and even in whole groups, owing to circumstances and backwardness in development. The actual requirements of human need, calling for immediate attention, cannot, therefore, be looked

upon as something fixed and settled for all time, but rather as a variable matter, depending in each case on circumstances and the previous history and development of the individual or group in question. The right and wrong of each case must therefore be judged separately on its own merits. It will be seen, then, that the matter of right and wrong becomes, to the humanistic outlook, a complex science, involving a broad knowledge and a very nice discrimination. No mere moral code, however inclusive, could serve. Of course, for practical purposes, it may be necessary to adopt such a code, temporarily. Even then, however, room must be left for exceptions, and the way left open for constant improvements, according as experience accumulates and knowledge broadens. For a moral code to become fixed and permanent and looked upon as universally applicable is to defeat its own purpose and to become a barrier to human welfare rather than an aid.

In determining all matters of conduct, the humanistic outlook recognizes the authority of fact, and none other. So far as the nature and laws of the universe and the nature, laws and needs of human life can be determined, these stand as authority. In their determination, the humanistic view recognizes the scientific method, of exact and comprehensive observation with proof wherever possible, as the correct one, and is willing to take counsel from such investigators as it believes have followed this method in an adequate manner. The natural sciences are consulted for facts as regards the material universe and the physical side

of human life. The social sciences are consulted for facts regarding the social side of human life, its laws and phenomena. A third type of science, still undeveloped, will provide all observable facts and laws relating to the spiritual side of human life. According to the humanistic viewpoint, too much exact knowledge cannot be provided. Mankind has been groping about in the dark too long. It is therefore insisted that what can be learned *be* learned, and that all practical judgments and conduct be guided according to the light of that knowledge.

On the other hand, the humanistic outlook recognizes the fact that our scientific knowledge is still very incomplete, and that it must always remain incomplete. Human life is greater than the sum of all human knowledge with regard to it; the sea of reality in whose midst human life is lived, and of which it is only one phenomenon, is vastly greater than the sum of all human knowledge of whatever sort. At its very best, scientific knowledge represents but a partial and strictly biased view of a part of reality. It is therefore an imperfect tool, useful for what it is worth, and no more. To build an entire philosophy exclusively on the findings of science would be like building a house upon a thin crust overlying quicksands. In this science-worshipping age, this is often attempted, but no one is satisfied with the result. The humanistic outlook recognizes the value of science for practical purposes, and cannot have too much of it, but itself is based on that which goes deeper than science, on human need

and experience, both of which come in touch with reality direct, without the intervention of observation and measurements. Naturally, a good many or all of its judgments will be influenced by this deeper acquaintance with reality, and not exclusively by scientific considerations.

The humanistic outlook does not, as some seem to think, exclude ideas of God as the Maker of human destinies. For man, the fact is that man is here, that he is what he is and that he needs what he needs. Man's part in the matter is to take what is given and make the most of it. How man came here, how he came to be what he is, and how he came to need what he needs—all that is another question, which may well be referred to God. Nor does the humanistic outlook exclude the notion that God is still at work helping man in his growth. All it postulates is that human need will never be satisfied unless man himself takes active and adequate measures to satisfy that need, without waiting for some other Power or Being to do it for him. With man doing the best at this task that he is able, there is still abundant room for an Invisible, Spiritual Being to lend its aid, especially in the way of increasing man's ability, and the humanistic view does not discourage notions of that sort. But it does discourage all conceptions of God and the supernatural which tend to paralyze or to diminish human effort and enterprise, or which stand in the way of the rational treatment of any human problem. The humanistic view is the unqualified foe of all forms of superstition.

But it is not hostile to religion. Itself, in fact, is a religious viewpoint, as we shall see presently. Nor does it make light of man's spirituality. It is concerned with man's physical need, for the physical basis of human life may not be neglected without harm to the life as a whole. It is concerned with man's social need, and with society's ways and means of accomplishing its functions, for the social is the gateway to the spiritual. But the main interest of the humanistic outlook is the main interest of man; that is, the spiritual. All other considerations are subordinate to this one. However, the spiritual is looked upon as something normally present and growing within man himself, not as something fundamentally alien to him, that needs to be imposed upon him from the outside. The fact that there is a difference and sometimes an opposition between the spiritual and the physical in an individual is fully recognized, as is also the necessity for the establishment of some sort of control within the individual. The further fact that the demands of society upon the individual are sometimes at variance with the spiritual needs of the latter is also recognized. All these facts are to be dealt with according to the principles determining right and wrong, already mentioned in this chapter. In such dealing, however, the humanistic stress upon the importance of the spiritual in human life must not be overlooked. If, as seems to be the case, the ultimate meaning of human life depends entirely upon man's achievement in the spiritual sphere, the spiritual must

receive precedence in any rational ordering of man's affairs.

As for the lessons of the past, the humanistic outlook does not imply that these should be scorned. Without our social heritage, we should have to begin again where the first men started. The many thousands of years since man first became human have been rich in experience. There took place countless more or less successful experiments in human life. Such achievements and records as remain to us of all this activity are of priceless value. They are the materials with which, in addition to man as he now is, we may build the new and better social world which we desire. The humanistic outlook recommends that the past be ransacked for human achievements applicable, as examples, to the need of to-day. Some of the achievements of the past have come down to us as knowledge, wealth and institutions in actual use to-day, but of many of them only the record remains, and these often are half-forgotten or misinterpreted. The humanistic outlook demands a thorough investigation of all of them, that the lessons they may have to teach us may not be neglected. Yet it is opposed to any slavish following of the past, or of any leader or institution of the past. Whatever is to be accepted out of our heritage, is to be received with the same critical spirit as that with which we receive something entirely new, and to be compelled to prove its usefulness from the standpoint of the need of to-day rather than from the standpoint of any past record it may have made,

The humanistic outlook being of the nature that we have described, it follows that this outlook must be hostile to certain other viewpoints or tendencies which are manifest in certain circles of modern life. For one thing, it is hostile to the viewpoint of the older Christianity, according as that is based upon notions of external authority, traditionalism, etc. This subject has already been treated in the earlier chapters of this book. The humanistic outlook is hostile also to mechanistic or naturalistic philosophies of the universe and of human life. Such philosophies, based upon too exclusive an attention on the results and theories of natural science, would reduce man to a mere machine, wound up since the beginning of time to run as he must, and would cut away all philosophic ground from under the feet of the humanist. The humanist feels that he has better ground for his assumptions and faith, since these spring directly out of his acquaintance with reality, than does the naturalistic philosopher for his assumptions, which are based upon far-fetched theorizing on a few externally observed facts. Life is greater than all human knowledge of it, and such knowledge as natural science can give is still more partial and one-sided than human knowledge as a whole. Any philosophy, therefore, which professes to explain all phenomena, man included, in terms of physical force or energy, which rules out the spiritual as a creative factor in human life, and which describes man as the inevitable result of forces definitely analyzable in a scientific laboratory and ultimately physical in all their

components—such a philosophy is condemned by the humanistic outlook as inconsistent with man's experience of reality and pernicious in its effect upon the thought and spirituality of the persons who hold it.

It will be seen, then, that the humanistic outlook does not countenance atheism. Atheism implies a soulless, and therefore mechanistic, universe. It grants only the shell of reality, the scientific aspect of it—it refuses to admit anything underlying that shell, any non-physical cause or directive power. According to it, only that which is discernible by the senses, or which would be so discernible were our senses acute enough, may properly be described as real. It is a crippled view of life, shutting out not merely the idea of God, but also everything that makes human life worth living, all spiritual values, all its hopes for the future, all its confidence in a backing, in the nature of things, to whatever is best and highest in human aspirations. A thoroughgoing atheism cannot be other than thoroughly pessimistic, so far as man is concerned. The humanistic outlook, on the other hand, is thoroughly optimistic. It stands at the opposite pole of human thought.

Moreover, it places its main emphasis on just those things which atheism makes light of. The tendency of the atheistic individual is toward animalism—disregard of the future, disregard of others, sensualism, immorality, lack of all moral standards, lack of appreciation or regard for anything save that which brings animal satisfaction, gross or more refined. The humanistic outlook draws much of its inspiration from its view of

the future and its possibilities; full regard for all that is human is one of its main foundation principles; moral standards are rated as of higher importance than physical need; spiritual values are regarded as the supreme values in human life. The humanistic outlook in a person tends to take him quite away from animalism and to cause him to live habitually on an entirely different level of being. It lifts the individual to that which is more fully human, where atheism, on the contrary, degrades the individual back toward the animal status of life.

Of course, it must be admitted that not all individuals who call themselves atheists are logically thorough in their atheism. Some of them, even, may be good humanists. In such a case, one of two situations is likely to prevail. Either the supposed atheism is confined to a denial of a particular idea of God, inconsistent with modern thought, and has no reference to the absolute soullessness of the universe or of man, or the atheism as held, though theoretically complete, is held as a theoretical philosophy only, and has no vital connection with the individual's practical philosophy, which is based on entirely different grounds. In either case, the combination of atheism and humanism within the same individual is possible only because of that individual's inconsistency. He has not thought any of his ideas through to their logical conclusion, or else has not cared to live in accord with their implications. As complete thought systems and exclusive bases of

conduct, atheism and humanism are diametrically opposed to each other.

It is unfortunately true that many lives to-day are lived on an atheistic basis without any clearly worked-out philosophical background whatsoever. That is, the individuals concerned live like thoroughgoing atheists without ever having given any serious thought to ultimate matters at all. They have followed the call of the animal within them until the spiritual element in their being was starved and atrophied and could no longer make itself felt. Humanism, in its efforts to rebuild the world after nobler patterns, must deal with this type of person all too frequently, but it will deal with him as a sub-normal, a degenerate, and not as a true human being.

Returning to a consideration of the essential elements in Christianity, those which have continued unchanged through all the vicissitudes of change in doctrine, in forms of worship and in modes of religious activity and expression—briefly summarized as belief in greater possibilities for man, in man's moral responsibility, in the abiding and supreme worth of the spiritual, in the unity of the human race, in the possibility of creating a better and a happier world than the one we now know, in the reality and power of God, and in the direct influence of God on the human soul—it becomes evident that all of them are essential also to the true humanistic outlook. Without any of them, the humanistic outlook would be baseless, a thought-system built,

in part, on thin air. We may say, then, that the humanistic outlook is, in the full sense of the word, a religion, and that it is essentially the Christian religion. It is the Christian religion, however, only in so far as we identify that religion with the core of historic Christianity, having stripped away all the temporary trappings of doctrine, ritual, polity and mode of practice. In a word, the humanistic outlook is Christianity reborn.

CHAPTER VII

THE KINGDOM OF GOD REINTERPRETED

It would seem from the records that the central purpose in the mind of Jesus, the founder of Christianity, was to establish the Kingdom of God. By the Kingdom of God Jesus meant an entire social order, managed in accord with the principles which, to Jesus' mind, God intended man to live by. Such a social order, of course, could be started in a small way, but there can be no question but that Jesus expected it ultimately to include the entire human race. The great aim of Jesus, then, was that the human world be made over so that all human life would be in accord with the God-ordained principles of human living.

To Jesus' mind, those principles were self-evident. A good part of his teaching was devoted to expositions of them, and to their application to various situations, but he never seemed to consider it necessary to establish or maintain them by argument. The true principles of human living were, to his mind, written in the nature of things. The nature of the Kingdom of God, as it was to be realized, would follow. Society would be patterned after the ideal family, the brotherly spirit would prevail in all human relations, and the whole

would be cemented by a dutiful filial attitude on the part of every one toward God, the All-Father, the one great binding force in human affairs. What was uppermost in Jesus' mind was the establishment of harmony, the first, as we have seen, of the three outstanding spiritual needs of man.

Jesus, however, gave the barest outline of what the Kingdom was to be. There are hints, in his teaching, that he himself was aware of this. "Seek ye first," he said, "the Kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." "These things" are the other things which human beings are interested in. They were all to have their place in the Kingdom, but the first problem was to get the Kingdom established. What, therefore, Jesus was urging was the first principles. He never painted any picture of what the Kingdom was to be like in detail after it had been realized. He saw no necessity for that, but he saw a great deal of necessity for making the first moves in the direction of the Kingdom.

Modern Christianity is true to the founder of the religion in that it sets before itself the same ruling purpose that Jesus had—the establishment of the Kingdom of God. It has come to realize that the determination of the God-ordained principles of human living is not quite as simple a matter as it seemed to Jesus. The modes of conduct which harm human life are likewise written in the nature of things and so might be called God-ordained principles. Moreover, modes of conduct which once had their use become harmful

as civilization advances. Modern Christianity has given up the attempt to deal with so complex a problem by the use of any simple formula or method. It has recognized the fact that the most beneficial principles of living must be determined by study, and that, when once so determined, they do not represent so much the will of God as man's own selection, which is always fallible and subject to revision. Modern Christianity, however, is again in accord with Jesus in that it feels the necessity, as Jesus did, of making spiritual values dominant in human affairs. The Kingdom of God is nothing other than a society in which spiritual values are everywhere so dominant. In this central characteristic, the Kingdom ideal has remained unchanged.

Owing to the recognized difficulty, not only of determining the exact principles according to which human life ought to be lived in order that the maximum of self-realization on the part of man might be attained, but also of applying those principles in the complex affairs of human society, the modern method of approach to the Kingdom is different from what seemed to be sufficient in Jesus' mind. Jesus' plan was to call all people to repentance, gather them together in a new social group, give them a few simple rules for their guidance, and let the new society take care of itself. At least, that was all he made provision for. Possibly he thought that God would do the rest. Modern Christianity, however, is more fully aware of the immensity of the problem. It has back of it nineteen centuries of Christian experience at the task of redeeming the world.

It is provided also with a huge mass of scientific knowledge regarding human nature and the social ways of man. For modern Christianity to content itself with the simple plan of the founder of the religion would be naïve, to say the least. One does not start removing a mountain with a crowbar.

The modern approach to the problem is a many-sided one. To this end, it has been necessary to fill out the outlines of Jesus' objective much more fully than he considered necessary. Not only harmony, but the other needs of the spirit, insight and creativeness, must be provided for. Further, the physical and social needs of man must be looked after in any adequate Kingdom scheme: they cannot be left to take care of themselves. With the detailed objectives clearly in mind, there still remains the necessity of developing an adequate technique for the realization of those ends. Capable volunteers are needed, efficient organization and suitable methods of work must be developed. The task of establishing the Kingdom of God is the biggest, the most varied and the most complicated that man has ever consciously faced.

Christianity is fortunately on the verge, at last, of correcting a mistake that was made formerly by nearly all of the followers of Jesus. It is the mistake of supposing that only the things which Jesus emphasized have any importance for Christianity. From such records as remain to us, it is evident that Jesus admitted the value of every legitimate human interest. His purpose undoubtedly was to put more meaning into

human life, not less. The ideals of asceticism were far from his mind. He, however, had a special mission to perform, and his time was short. Moreover, the difficulties in his way were great. He could stress only the few things which he found it immediately necessary to drive home into the minds of those about him. He had time for nothing else. The mistake started when Jesus' followers took the few remembered sayings of Jesus, supplemented by odd letters from the correspondence of Paul, another intense propagandist, and the already moribund literature of the Ancient Hebrews, and attempted to find in them a complete and final rule of life. It is small wonder that, in the eyes of many, Christianity seemed to subtract from life rather than add to it, and that the ways of the world outside of Christianity seemed to them more attractive. Modern Christianity has come to recognize the fact that Jesus made the merest beginning at the task which he set, and that far more than propaganda is needed before that task can be completed. The whole of human life, with every sphere of interest, must be brought within the domain of Christianity before Christianity itself can be adequate for human need.

For the Kingdom ideal to appeal, then, to the mind of to-day, it must include the ideal for every sphere of human interest—must be coextensive, in fact, with the human ideal as a whole, as that ideal appears to the Christian or humanistic mind. It would seem, therefore, that the time has arrived for a reinterpretation of Jesus' concept, and this has actually been attempted

in many quarters. We shall attempt it in this chapter, endeavoring, by avoiding the traditional phraseology and range of ideas in connection with the subject, to keep the discussion within the field of present-day thought.

In the first place, we will drop the term, *Kingdom of God*, and use instead the phrase, *The Social Aim of Christianity*. The latter will express much more adequately what we mean. Under the general heading thus provided, we may list a number of subheads, all of them representing spheres of human interest with which modern humanistic Christianity is concerned. Among these subheads we may include the political aims of Christianity, the economic aims, the hygienic aims, the social contact aims, the educational aims, the vocational aims, the artistic aims and the religious aims. Instead of making one sweeping statement as to the social aim of Christianity as a whole, and thus remaining among generalities too broad to be of any real service, we shall find it more profitable to take up the suggested subheads one by one.

Modern Christianity undoubtedly has political aims, since government is one of the vital concerns of human beings everywhere. These aims are at once less pretentious and more so than the aims of organized Christianity in the past. The thought of any ecclesiastical organization dictating to or controlling a government is abhorrent to the modern mind. The political aims of the new Christianity include nothing of that sort. The business of government is to remain

strictly in the hands of those who have been appointed to take charge of it. Nor does the Christian ideal dictate any particular form of government. It does, of course, favor some form of democracy where democracy is feasible. But among peoples where monarchy or aristocracy works better, it favors those forms. It is not so much the forms that matter, as the way in which whatever form there is happens to be managed. The interest of Christianity as regards government is primarily in the men who have active charge of the ruling power in nation, state or city. What sort of men are they? What are their ideals? What are their working principles? Also, are they capable of doing in a satisfactory manner the work they have undertaken? What Christianity aims to do in the matter is to transform the spirit of the men who do the governing, in so far as that needs to be transformed, and to see that those men are capable. The spirit it demands in public servants is the spirit of honest and intelligent service to the entire community or nation without partiality or special favor to any part of it. In a word, the Christian aim is to see that all governmental positions are held by individuals in whose minds the humanistic outlook is dominant, and who are ruled by Christian principles. It is at that point that we may say Modern Christianity exceeds the Christianity of the past in the pretensions of its political aims. For the most part, government was looked upon as a thing apart from Christianity, a force to be influenced and controlled, so far as possible, but nevertheless as essentially separate, and even alien.

Modern Christianity sees no division line. Government is as much an interest of religion as any other, and it is proposed to make it thoroughly Christian by putting it into the hands of Christian individuals, who will conduct it according to Christian principles.

This end is not to be achieved, however, by political manipulation. The Christian way of attaining its ends is not by the use of force, even political force, but through enlightenment, the development of a Christian opinion, both public and private. When, in a democratic nation like the United States, public opinion everywhere demands capable individuals of Christian principles in the public offices, and this demand is reinforced by the private conscience of the individuals who are actually in office, a Christian government is inevitable, and that without a single interference on the part of any ecclesiastical body. It is, in fact, the only way to achieve a government that is actually Christian, and permanently so. But it is no short cut. Modern Christianity has ceased to believe in short cuts.

Aside from the main political objective of Christianity—that of putting government into the hands of individuals who will apply Christianity in their work of governing—another aim is to make certain political principles and objectives a part of the ordinary thinking of people everywhere, and thus to realize them ultimately in practice. One of these is the principle that the one function of government is to protect and enlarge the freedom and opportunities of all the people to the greatest possible extent, and that the only way

to perform this function is through a fair and even-handed justice to all. According to this principle, it is as much the function of government to suppress favoritism and special privilege as it is to control lawlessness and irresponsibility. A second principle, growing out of the first, is that it is the function of government to develop and conserve all the resources of its people, both physical and spiritual, so far as this can be done without injustice.

As regards other nations and peoples, Christianity has a very definite word to say. It demands that other nations and peoples be regarded and treated with the same consideration as that with which a government treats its own citizens. The Christian aim is to induce every government to refrain from exploiting foreign peoples and from conducting agitations against them, as well as to suppress such exploitation and agitation on the part of its citizens. It aims, further, to induce the governments to coöperate with each other in every way possible, even to the extent of establishing a super-state, or federation of nations, both for the purpose of facilitating coöperation, and for the purpose of eliminating war. This, again, is to be accomplished by the development of public opinion rather than by political pressure.

The economic aims of Christianity are perhaps the most revolutionary of all its objectives. Here again, however, we must hasten to say that the religion does not specially favor any particular type of economic organization. It is not, for example, inherently opposed

to capitalism, nor does it necessarily prefer communism or socialism. That is a matter which must be worked out by economists and the preference of the people concerned. On the other hand, it is quite evident that the modern capitalistic system, *as it exists to-day*, is not conducted in accordance with Christian principles. For the most part, Christian principles are disregarded in its management, as though it were possible to be religious at home and at church, and the contrary while in the office or at one's business. Every domain of human life is influenced by economic considerations, so that, if it were impossible to Christianize our economic system, the social aim of Christianity might as well be given up altogether. But to Christianize the present economic system will mean nothing short of revolution.

The present system is based on the assumption that man is, first, last and always, selfish, in the narrow sense of the word. The counters with which it plays are, on the one side, material wants, and, on the other side, the compulsion of necessity. Every principle of the game, for so we call it, is borrowed from the jungle, where the law is to take as much as you can for yourself, while giving as little in return as you can get by with. Every worker, every business, is thus under the compulsion of an unrelenting necessity, by which the actual demands of human welfare are disregarded. On the other hand, material wants are stimulated past the saturation point, leading to an unnatural quickening of the pace of getting and spending and to a huge wast-

age of both material and spiritual resources. It is impossible for an individual to be fully and properly human while taking his full part in modern economic activities. He is mainly a producing and a consuming machine, spiritual interests pushed aside and, in large measure, neglected.

The spirit promoted and, to a considerable degree, realized by our economic system is un-Christian. Where a person is driven, on the one hand, by the struggle for life, and lured, on the other, by all kinds of material attractions which will be his if he can make his money easily and quickly, his natural tendency is not to be too scrupulous. Moral and spiritual considerations are easily forgotten in the heat of the conflict, or of the race. It is not surprising, then, that our entire system of business and industry, though seemingly peaceful and coöperative, means war to the knife under the surface, man against man, business against business, class against class, and nation against nation. In such a war, the driving of workers as though they were so many slaves is not to be wondered at, nor do we need to marvel at the deceit that is being practiced on the public at large, the buyers who provide the resources by which the struggle may go on.

The trouble with the system is that it just grew up—it was not built. No superior intelligence nor any high moral principle went into its making, nothing but crude necessity and natural law. Men have tried to mollify the working of the system at this point and that, and have succeeded here and there, at least in a

small way and temporarily. Practical reformers, however, generally hesitated to touch the roots of the system, thus leaving its main effect unchanged. The problem of Christianity with regard to it includes far more than such petty tinkering. The Christian aim demands that the whole of it be made over so as to rest on a humanistic basis, a matter which will take conscious and concerted effort over a long period of time.

The very last method of approach with any chance of achieving this end would be to abolish present institutions by fiat and begin to build new institutions from the ground up. It is the thinking of the people that must be rebuilt first. It is within the range of possibility to induce an individual to dedicate himself to Christian motives and ideals and even to get him to apply his Christian principles to his business. If that individual will be thorough and consistent in such application, the chances are that he will be at an economic disadvantage. However, let us suppose that the number of Christian men be increased indefinitely, and let us suppose further, that they be organized with the expressed purpose of putting their businesses on a Christian basis. Let us suppose, further, that large numbers of workers and consumers formed part of the same organization and were moved by the same motives. If all of these individuals were in real earnest, and if the organization were effective, Christian principles would then no longer be at a disadvantage in industry and commerce. The other kind would suffer then.

The key to the problem is—that those who call themselves Christian be really serious in their Christian aims, at least as serious as they have proved themselves to be in their business. That accomplished, the reconstruction of the system itself will come easily. Numerous modifications will ensue. Capital will be distributed among the workers, where it belongs. Workers, whether manual, clerical, executive or professional, will be paid more in accord with the actual human value of their product. Excessive fortunes, and, with them, the inheritance nuisance, will disappear. Individual workers will be provided for according to their ability and industry, and the specter of unemployment be removed out of modern society. Overstimulation of material wants and present wasteful methods of distribution will be replaced by a scientifically calculated production for actual need and by an economical distribution system. Life will slow down its pace, and time and energy be left for the development of the spiritual resources, which, after all, count for most in human life.

The hygienic aims of Modern Christianity are, for the most part, well understood. Healthy bodies, healthy communities, an entire society composed of healthy individuals living in healthy environments—these are now the ideal of practically all enlightened individuals as well as of the hygienic efforts of states and educational institutions. However, there are a number of pest sources in modern civilization which badly need cleaning up, and which cannot be approached effectively

by ordinary methods. One of these is sex as a source of disease. The world has not yet known any sane treatment of sex, except in the case of scattered individuals and families, and, perhaps, in the case of a few communities. Both attitude and practice in the matter have generally been idiotic. It is one of the problems of Modern Christianity to work out a proper attitude and a right treatment with regard to this, one of the most serious of man's perplexities, and to bring about their general adoption. Again, this is not an impossibility, where the purpose is strong enough and the effort as concerted and intelligent as it ought to be.

What we refer to as the social contact aims of Christianity covers a field with which traditional Christianity actually did concern itself, though with only partial success. It includes what we may call the face-to-face relations between individuals, in home, school, church, society, community or wherever human beings thus meet. So much has been said and written on the subject that we need not go into it any further here, unless it be to say that Christian ideals in the matter have fully proven their worth, as against all contrary tendencies, and that the only way to conquer the world completely for Christian manners is for Christians to continue to apply them, altogether regardless of the fact whether they are reciprocated or not. If a Christian reserves his Christian manners only for such as act in a like manner toward him, his Christianity does not mean much, either to himself or to anyone else. And, when we speak here of manners, we refer

also to that which goes deeper than manners—morals—though morals is a term which covers a great deal more than what properly belongs to the face-to-face relations of social contact.

Coming to the educational aims of Christianity, we may say that, in a sense, these include all the others, since modern Christianity hopes to achieve all of its ends by a process of education. Used in this way, however, the term education is more inclusive than the word as ordinarily used. Many people still think of the process as one by which the learner acquires the mental tools he needs in order to meet the requirements of modern economic and social life. To them, education still means reading and writing and arithmetic, with such additions and amplifications as the greater complexities of present-day civilization demand. Since, however, the importance of opinions is becoming more and more clearly evident, especially to such as have anything to do, consciously, with the problems of social control, many persons have added to their notion of education as a tool the further notion, of education as a provider and molder of opinions. The schools, according to this view, are to furnish the "right" content for the future thought of the learner, as well as to give him the intellectual equipment needed to take his place in the community. Broader-minded individuals, and those who have followed the development of modern educational theory, have still another view. It is that the true function of education is to develop the personality of the learner, by putting at his command all

the resources of the human heritage and by encouraging him to activity along the lines of his natural aptitude. This would make of the schools a sort of a green-house affair, in which, favorable conditions and stimuli being provided in lavish profusion, the human plant might be expected to grow to the full extent of its capacity.

The Christian idea of education includes all of these ideas, and more. In the first place, to the Christian view, education is a process continuing throughout life, and not merely a preparation for life. Of such education, a part—a minor part—takes place in the schools. Some of it is consciously planned and directed; some of it takes place without either teacher or learner being aware of the fact. The agencies through which it takes place are many and various—schools, books, periodicals, churches, public meetings, theaters, social gatherings, offices, factories; in a word, all the agencies which in any way touch the life of the individual. The Christian aim is to make this continuous and many-sided process so far as possible, purposive; that is, to make it serve to develop individuals who will approach the humanistic ideal of perfection and who are equipped, both as to outlook and as to technical knowledge, to make their full contribution to the making of a Christian civilization. Three elements in education need to be considered. There are, first, the needs and capacities of the learner; second, the established order of things and the social heritage upon which it is based; and, third, the Christian or humanistic ideal. To the

Christian view, these three elements are equally important. It is equally important that the individual learn to make the most of himself, realize the full possibilities of his being, and that he learn to fit himself into existing society in a harmonious and effective manner, and that he be prepared to contribute his full share to the common betterment of all. Likewise is it equally important that, in working toward these ends, the educative process be based on the individual's capacities and aptitudes, and that full use be made of the social heritage, and that the Christian ideal be kept uppermost in the learner's mind throughout.

The fault with nearly all conscious attempts at education in the past was that one or more of these elements were overlooked entirely, and that those elements which were recognized were too narrowly conceived. Modern education, strong in its zeal for the learner's personality, has often overlooked the many-sidedness of that personality, and, by giving too much range and stimulus to one side of it, succeeded in dwarfing and misdeveloping other sides. Older methods of education frequently accomplished their aim of transmitting the social heritage, or selected parts of it, and fitting the learner into existing society, only at great expense to the learner's own personality. Forms of distinctively Christian education disregarded, in many cases, both the needs of the individual and the facts of society, and so succeeded in producing individuals who were neither a joy to themselves nor a benefit to the rest of their kind. The problem of devising and putting into prac-

tice methods of education which take into full account all of the three elements we have mentioned, all of them conceived in a really broad and inclusive manner, is yet to be solved.

Evidently, selection is needed. No individual can attain to the utmost possible development along all lines opened by his natural capacities and aptitudes. Time and energy are limited. Moreover, there are present in the individual numerous contrary tendencies, so that strong development along one line will necessarily exclude development along certain other lines. In any education, some capacities and tendencies will be stressed and developed at the expense, more or less, of others. Selection, therefore, is needed to determine what, in the individual's personality, is to receive full development. In the second place, it is necessary to select from the social heritage those elements of which largest use will be made in the educative process. No person can acquire all of the world's knowledge, nor can he stretch his interest so as to cover all that human beings have ever been interested in. Still less can he adopt all the methods, opinions, manners and customs, or serve all the institutions that mankind has ever had, or that are in existence now. Here again there must be selection. And, from the Christian angle, it is highly important that this selection, in both instances, be made in accordance with the Christian ideal.

Taking the educative process as a whole, it must be said that such selection as is taking place to-day is done in an exceedingly haphazard and inconsistent manner,

much of it being unconscious altogether. That is, there is no purpose in the educative process as a whole. The result is an education that is chaos. The effects of the more or less purposive education of the schools are counteracted by the decidedly unpurposive education of the streets and the factories; the efforts of the churches are neutralized by what goes on outside the churches; the good results of one type of literature are canceled by the bad effects of another type; the discipline of trade or vocation is counterbalanced by the license of the leisure hours; and so on. That there is anything like unified character or spiritual effectiveness among the individuals of the modern world has become almost a matter to marvel at. It does, indeed, speak volumes for the basic soundness of man's spiritual constitution.

It is one of the aims of modern Christianity, then, to put the entire educative process on a purposive basis, so far as this is humanly possible. This will mean that practically all the influences which go into the making of a person, from the time of his birth until his death, be selected influences, the selection having been consciously made with a view to the making of full-rounded Christian personalities and to the progressive realization of a Christian social order. Not that the selection is ever to be intrusted to a committee appointed for the purpose or to an organized institution, such as the church or the government: it must be achieved through the development of a popular consensus, embodying the Christian or humanistic view, substantially as defined

elsewhere in this book. How the Christian forces must proceed in order to attain this end is a matter which will be taken up in later chapters.

The vocational aims of Christianity may be summarized briefly as the aim to lift labor out of the disrepute into which it has fallen with many and to make every individual's task that individual's greatest opportunity, the aim to put every individual at the sort of task for which he is best fitted and in which he can find most pleasure, and to give him adequate preparation for that task and the fullest possible opportunities in it, and the aim to so organize the work of the world that every task in it is an actual contribution to the common welfare as well as to the welfare of the worker, thus making every individual a necessary link in the great coöperative enterprise of doing the work that needs to be done. Work is no hardship intrinsically; it is man who has made it such. Man can remake it into what it ought to be, a means of self-expression and self-development, as well as of service. A great part of human misery, inefficiency and futility is due to maladjustments between individuals and their work. All this could be righted by the kind of adjustments spoken of. As for the better ordering of the vocational side of society as a whole, that would do away with the immense amount of waste effort that characterizes the present working world, would bring it about that all the needed work of whatever sort should be done easily, effectively and with abundant margins of leisure for all. It would add materially, also, to the self-respect and

consequent idealism of the population, a thing of no small value.

To the artistic aims of Christianity far too little attention has been given in recent times. It is true that Christianity aims to create the good life and the good environment, but its purpose is as much also to create the beautiful life and the beautiful environment. As we have already seen, the two qualities—the good and the beautiful—are very closely related. In our ordinary thinking, however, they usually are associated with two different sets of ideas. Beauty is generally regarded as a luxury rather than as a necessity. But, to modern Christianity—to humanistic Christianity, as we have defined it—beauty is as much a necessity as is virtue or even as is the food that men eat to keep their bodies alive. The justification for this attitude is found in the actual needs of man. The normal human being, and this is particularly true in the more advanced stages of spiritual development, seeks and finds satisfaction and stimulus in forms of beauty, creates forms of beauty, aspires to transform his entire environment so as to be in accord with the ideas of beauty which he carries in his mind. This constant striving after the beautiful, which is far more universal than is generally supposed, is one of the outstanding facts about human life. That is, life would not be human without it—it is, in a large measure, the explanation of human life: it is one of the things, perhaps the one thing, for which human life exists. The progressive realization of a beautiful world through the coöperative creative activity

of the many ranks high, therefore, among the social aims of Christianity.

What we may call the art impulse in man suffers sadly through lack of proper stimuli, opportunities and direction. The scarcity of real artists in the world, and the consequent ugliness of the man-made world, is not due to a lack of artistic ambition or ability. Such ambition and ability are almost universal, at least in latent form. Indeed, most people are artists in fact, actually at work translating their ideals of beauty, so far as they can, into visible forms, or they are such until they are utterly discouraged in the attempt. A false philosophy of art has made it a matter exclusively of the individual, and of the exceptional individual, at that. In reality, art is a social product, socially inspired, socially guided and socially appreciated. Where the community exists that demands artistic work from the ordinary citizen, that schools him in the nature and method of artistic work, and that puts him, in company with his fellows, at the task of creating such work, proof is immediately at hand that talent for art is practically universal, and that one of the major sources of the joy of living remains untapped until the practice of art in a really adequate manner becomes universalized also.

It is, then, one of the aims of modern Christianity to turn every community into an art-creating community, and to transform every industry, every trade and every profession, in so far as it can possibly lend itself to that end, into an enterprise for increasing and multiplying the beauty that is in man's environment

or in his life and for eliminating the ugliness that has crept in through past mistakes.

As for the religious aims of Christianity, they enter into all the rest, giving meaning and force to them. Nevertheless, there is a distinct sphere of human interest and activities to which the word *religious* applies more specifically than to any of the others. It was no mistake on the part of the human race to form the habit of setting apart certain hours and certain days and certain places for activities intended to keep them in closer touch with the Source of their being and the Ruler of their destinies. If man is a spiritual being, growing from the smallest beginnings in spiritual life toward maturity and perfection, he will need spiritual stimulus and vision. Much of this, no doubt, comes indirectly, through his various tasks and the contacts of every-day life. But experience has shown how the mind of man is apt to fall into a rut, in which it will grind away until all broader vision is lost and the greater part of the every-day stimuli of life remain unheeded. It is the function of the activities which we call religious to lift the human soul out of reach of the mind's ruts for a time, to put it in touch again with the infinite realities upon which the soul's life depends, to broaden the outlook and to renew the effectiveness of the stimuli of the spirit.

Whatever may be the means adopted to that end, it is the religious aim of modern Christianity to keep human beings everywhere aware of the presence, the range, the quality and the value of the spiritual in the

world and in their own lives. This done, the rest of the tasks which it has undertaken, covering the whole range of Christianity's social aims as we have outlined them in this chapter, will not prove nearly as difficult as they may at first have seemed.

The religious task of Christianity, then, is soul-culture, and has as little to do with theology, either old or new, as did the life of Rome in the days of Cicero or Augustus have to do with the study of Latin grammar as it is being pursued in the schools and colleges of to-day. It is therefore important that we examine what may be the proper method of preparation for this task.

CHAPTER VIII

A SUBSTITUTE FOR THEOLOGY

WE have seen that the social aims of Christianity cover the entire range of human interest. We have seen, also, that the method of realizing those aims must be largely one of education. Education as thought of in this connection, however, implies a great deal more than formal schooling. It implies more even than intellectual enlightenment and training, though we include everything of that sort which may take place from the very first day of the individual's life to his last. There must be soul-nurture as well as mental culture. It is not enough that the individual know what is good; he must also have the will to the good. The cultivation, then, of the still all-too-feeble spiritual in man is an important part, probably the most important part, of the educational task of Christianity.

To this end, as well as for purposes of organization and mental enlightenment, there is need for prophets, leaders, organizers and directors of the common effort. One might suppose that of such there is a vast body at hand—that is, the clergy of the various churches. But, unfortunately, most of the clergy are unfitted for the task. This is not due to lack of ability; the ability

average of the clergy is high as compared with that of other classes and professions. The real difficulty is that, generally speaking, they have no preparation for their task. As we have seen, this task consists primarily of keeping alive and stimulating the spiritual in their communions and communities, and, secondarily, of educating, organizing and directing their people to the end of remaking society and, incidentally, themselves also. For effective work toward these ends, it is apparent that they ought to know all that can be known about the spiritual and its nurture, and that, further, they should have a fairly thorough acquaintance with what modern study has revealed concerning man and society in general. Instead of that, the average clergyman of to-day, up to the day of his entrance into the ministry, has been studying theology, a concoction of opinions, usually more or less antiquated, and having but little to do with either man or society or even the spiritual, as they actually exist in the world. The result is that the minister begins his task not only unprepared but also with a viewpoint permanently twisted and impaired, and so doubly unfitted for the very delicate and exacting work he has undertaken. It must be said, of course, that some individual ministers manage to forget their theological training and learn to accommodate themselves to the needs of their calling. But they are the exception, and even they are at a serious handicap.

Theology, as one of the subdivisions of philosophy, undoubtedly has a place within the sphere of human

interest, and should not be neglected entirely, though it is highly important that it be based upon modern knowledge and not upon opinions current in ancient or medieval times. The place of theology, even at its best, however, is a small one, and should occupy a correspondingly small place in the minister's schooling. Instead of the years spent in studying Old Testament, New Testament, Dogmatics, and the like, it would be far better if the prospective minister devoted himself to psychology, sociology and the rest of the social sciences. Indeed, the latter should form a substantial part of every minister's preparation.

But even psychology and the social sciences do not yet constitute the professional part of the minister's preparation. They have somewhat the same relation to such professional preparation as does the pre-medical course, now offered by some colleges, to a preparation for the practice of medicine and surgery. Psychology and the social sciences, then, should form a major part of the minister's undergraduate college course. But, since this preliminary preparation might, with profit, be demanded also of such as aimed to be teachers, lawyers, social workers, and so on, it could hardly be called strictly professional preparation on the part of the minister. Moreover, it would still fail to touch the heart of the minister's problem—that is, the nurture of the spiritual. The special professional knowledge which the minister or any other leader in the Christian movement needs to acquire is knowledge of the spiritual,

Unfortunately, the Science of the Spiritual does not yet exist. Wherever there is an order of phenomena not adequately studied and correlated by other sciences there is room for a science of those phenomena in particular. Spiritual phenomena, though touched upon in both psychology and sociology, are but partially and inadequately treated there. The limits of those sciences would not admit of anything different. Beyond psychology and sociology, science, properly speaking, has not yet gone. No one has made an impartial study of the manifestations of the spirit in man, observing them in all their variety, correlating them, classifying them, working out their laws, investigating their nature and limits and differentiating them from other phenomena in association with which they usually appear and with which they are often confused. In this, the most important sphere of human interest, wordy welfare has taken the place of strict investigation, with the result that those who should be the leaders of their kind to further development within it have as little actual knowledge of what they are called upon to promote as do the ones whom they are trying to teach.

It would seem urgent, then, that a Science of the Spiritual be developed, and that all religious leaders and all who aim to be such devote themselves to a systematic study of it. The change of emphasis from theology to an objective study of existing phenomena would have a wholesome effect in eliminating, in large measure, the causes for division and dissention among the forces of organized Christianity, and thus would

open the way for a more effective coöperation. It would also raise the status of the minister in the popular estimation and materially increase his influence, for the futility of his present occupation with empty theories and outworn platitudes has become too apparent to escape the notice of even the unlearned. The chief gain, however, would be the increase in real effectiveness on the part of the individual minister or spiritual leader himself, who would thus find himself actually prepared to work at the task set for him.

In order to proceed to a scientific study of the spiritual, it will be necessary, in the first place, to form some preliminary notion of what the spiritual is. We have already done this, in a measure, in an earlier chapter of this book. It remains for us here to define our concept more clearly and to mark out the boundaries, in so far as that is possible, between it and our ideas of the biological and the social. Absolute differentiation is impossible, since biological, social and spiritual are, all three, different levels of the same life, each higher level being dependent upon those beneath it and inseparable from them, at least in so far as present human experience goes. Since, however, the social includes an order of phenomena not necessarily associated with the biological in order that the latter may exist, and the spiritual comprises an order of phenomena which are not necessary for the existence of the social, it is possible, for purposes of study, to determine with reasonable definiteness just what we mean by the various terms.

By the biological, then, we mean the life of the body, the sum of the adjustments which the physical organism makes between its own parts and between itself and its external environment. This is the basis of all life as we know it, but there are many forms of biological life which are neither social nor spiritual. By the social, in so far as it exists as an entity within the individual, we mean that part of him which responds mentally to stimuli from other individuals like him and which is capable of giving such stimuli in return. The whole life of human society is made up of interstimulation and response, acting through the conscious mind. It is thus that manners, customs, institutions and entire cultures or civilizations grow up and dominate the lives of those born under their sway. The spiritual is so closely associated with the social that it is at first hard to distinguish the two. But it comprises an order of phenomena without which it is conceivable that social life could continue and thrive indefinitely. Indeed, it is probable that such was actually the case in the earliest stages of human development. Even to-day, many human lives seldom rise out of the biological and the social into the sphere of the spiritual.

As we have already seen, the spiritual is that in the individual which drives him to seek harmony, insight and creative achievement. The quest of harmony is a striving after adjustment, but it is an adjustment of a different sort from what is sought in the biological and the social spheres. The physical organism strives to

adjust itself to the physical impacts of its immediate environment. The social element in the person strives to adjust him to other persons in his environment, so that his life will form an integral part of the life of the group. So far, the adjustments are of what may be called a practical nature, having to do only with that limited circle within which the environment comes in actual contact with the individual. The spiritual is content with no such limited arrangement. It strives to adjust the person to the sum total of reality—to the entire universe, and to all forms of existence, both visible and invisible.

The quest of insight has its counterpart in the biological and social striving after knowledge. In the case of the latter, however, the striving is with practical ends in view. The individual is seeking physical or social satisfaction, and it is with these ends in view that he does his learning. He is content to know things as they stand in relation to him, or as they affect him. So long, then, as a person remains on the biological and social levels, the knowledge of external appearances suffices. But the spiritual, on the other hand, strives to understand things as they are in themselves, and is always seeking to penetrate beneath mere external appearance. In doing so, furthermore, it forgets all practical aims and purposes. To know or to understand, for the spiritual, is enough. In the long run, no doubt, practical ends will be served by such knowledge, but for the time being they are forgotten in the joy of the knowing.

And it is the knowledge itself, rather than any possible use of it, which keeps the individual active in its pursuit.

Creative achievement seems to be the ultimate end toward which all spiritual activity, as we know it, is striving. There are types of achievement prompted by and giving satisfaction to the biological and the social in man. These, however, are of an immediately practical nature. Certain biological or social ends are desired and striven after, and when they are attained the achievement is complete. It is the ends sought that are the important thing, and, since the work involved is often of a burdensome character, the task of making the achievement is in many cases forcibly imposed upon individuals who have little or no interest in it. In creative achievement, the work itself becomes the thing desired. The product may have independent value and will be prized accordingly by such as may use or enjoy it, but to the maker it is the joy of the making that counts most. In a very real sense, he finds himself in his task. Of course there are ends sought in this sort of achievement also, but they are not what is usually defined as practical; that is, they represent values outside of the sphere of the biological and the social. Every creative achievement is an expression, in visible, tangible form, of some invisible, intangible idea, spiritual in its nature and origin. In its full form, the quest of creative achievement constitutes an ambition to remake the entire world, in so far as it can be affected by man, from what it is to what it ought to be; that is, from its pres-

ent condition to one in accord with the invisible, spiritual idea which the creative individual has conceived.

Having gained a fairly clear motion of what constitutes the proper sphere of spiritual phenomena or manifestations, the student is prepared for the next step, which will be to make an objective but sympathetic examination of all such manifestations as he can bring within the range of his observation. Here is where the methods of the natural scientist will furnish an illuminating precedent. It is because the natural scientist has condescended to become a patient gatherer of facts, taking every precaution to see that even those of seeming insignificance are accurately observed and recorded, that he has been able to arrive at the present far-reaching results. The only fruitful method for the student of the spiritual is to go and do likewise. Of course, his materials will be found in all sorts of places, expected and unexpected. Far more needs to be investigated than the phenomena which are ordinarily known as "religious." Spiritual phenomena are manifest throughout the records of history, in all intimate biography, in literature, in art, as well as in definitely religious institutions and activities. Of the amount of material that is at hand for such study there can be no question—it is enormous. Since the spiritual element in all of this material is mixed with other elements, biological or social in their origin, the study will by no means be an easy one. A good grounding in the biological and social sciences as a prerequisite will be practically a necessity. Even then it will take a keen

eye and a discriminating mind to detect the presence of the spiritual and to disentangle it from its associations in many of the cases where it appears. Perfection in this kind of work is not to be expected at the outset; efficiency will grow with practice. One point, however, must be emphasized. The approach must always be sympathetic. The investigator must be of a strong spiritual bent himself and able to distinguish readily between spiritual values and others. No amount of training will supply this aptitude if it is absent in the person to begin with.

After a rather full objective study, a classification of materials becomes imperative. Since, as I have said, the science has not yet been born, we have no inkling of what this classification will be like, but we may venture to state that it will reveal, in general terms and more exactly than any preliminary survey can do it, the range and the content of the spiritual life. It will reveal, further, the modes by which the spiritual life has up to now found expression. In the third place, it will enable the investigator to form some sort of an estimate as to the power of the spiritual in human life and society as a whole. Other scientific studies have revealed the power of the biological and of the social in human life and affairs, and have so impressed the minds of those who specialized on these aspects that some of them jumped to the conclusion that human life is governed entirely by biological considerations or by social considerations, according as they happened to specialize in biology or in sociology. Those who have

been accustomed to view the phenomena of human life from the spiritual angle have long been convinced that spiritual considerations are as powerful a factor in the life of man as any—perhaps the most powerful factor. It will be exceedingly worth while to clear up the matter by scientific study, and to determine, to some degree of exactness, what is the actual power and place of the spiritual in the life and affairs of man as compared to the power and place of the other factors which enter into them. Then and then only can the spiritual worker approach his task other than blindly or be assured the confidence of foreseen results which now belongs, as by natural right, to the physician and the social worker.

At this point, the investigator is prepared to examine the grounds of the spiritual. The ultimate grounds must, of course, remain scientifically unknown. This is true, likewise, of the ultimate grounds of other things. We know that matter and energy are present in the universe, and we can study their manifestations and laws; but how they came to be, we cannot tell. The same is true of biological life and of social life. If we refer them all to God, we are on safe ground philosophically, for such an origin cannot be disproved, and the idea helps our mental and spiritual processes. A venture of faith on that point is altogether desirable, if only from the pragmatic viewpoint. But conclusive knowledge we have none. It may be, of course, that in time we shall have conclusive knowledge. As men come to a better understanding of the spiritual and to a more complete realization of it in their lives, it may

be that a more definite knowledge of the real God can be attained than is now possible. Meanwhile, it is well to rely upon faith in the matter.

But there are what we may call secondary grounds; that is, precedents and circumstances out of which the spiritual may be seen to grow. These are observable and may be studied. Certain periods of history, certain parts of the world, certain types of society, seem to have been more productive of spiritual gain on the part of man than were others. Undoubtedly, social and other environmental factors have much to do with spiritual origins and growth. The relation is one which needs to be studied. Further, attempts at the nurture of the spiritual are not a new thing. More or less aware of the spiritual and its value, human beings have for many centuries developed and made use of a great variety of institutions and other means for the purpose of such nurture. In many cases, no small success was obtained. The experience accumulated in this way should be of no small service to the spiritual promoter of to-day. It is by a study of these pioneer attempts that many points may be cleared up with regard to the manner in which the spiritual makes its first appearance, the circumstances which call it forth, and the methods by which it may be stimulated, strengthened and directed into fruitful channels.

The next step in the study will be to differentiate the spiritual from the other elements, biological and social, with which it is mixed in life as we know it. Some such differentiation is necessary from the very beginning of

the study, but it cannot be done with any great precision before a rather advanced stage of the study has been reached. To determine just what is spiritual in a particular motive, or a particular social movement, or in a particular activity of any kind, is no light task. The Christianity of the past made all too little attempt at such differentiation, with the result that the Christian movement became guilty, at times, of the most un-Christian of activities. Even to-day there is a strong tendency among people to lump together everything that is seen together, as though it were all of one substance. Such crudeness is the cause of many an injustice and many a spiritual set-back. It undoubtedly is at the bottom of a good deal of the lack of coöperation and of the actual rivalry and strife which are to be met with in organized society. There can be no question but that it is the chief reason for the numerous divisions and the frequently active strife within institutional Christianity. Without a precise differentiation between the spiritual and the non-spiritual, it is impossible to conceive a sound program for spiritual promotion and advance, not to speak of achieving its adoption or carrying it into effect. The best of intentions may be successful only in establishing a nuisance, if the proper knowledge is lacking.

The main purpose of the differentiation of the spiritual from the non-spiritual is, of course, to make the spiritual fully conscious of itself. Or rather, we should say, it is to make the mind fully conscious of the spiritual as an entity. So long as the spiritual is

known only as a series of scattered and apparently unrelated impulses and experiences, mixed with other impulses and experiences most evidently not spiritual, the mind is unable to give any effective service toward purely spiritual ends. Where a person, active in the pursuit of spiritual experience or achievement, is unable to distinguish between shell and substance, between empty form and life-giving principle, he is likely to achieve nothing but error and futility for his pains. Again and again an entire movement, originally giving great promise of spiritual gain, went to serve ends not intended or came to naught altogether because its spiritual objectives were not clearly enough discerned by its promoters. And in the individual, in his personal struggle for spiritual self-realization, little progress can be promised unless his discernment in the matter, so far as he himself is affected, has become quite keen. Contrary to the fond hope to which people have clung for many centuries past, there is no set rule for spiritual self-realization, or for salvation, as men used to put it. The distinction between spiritual and non-spiritual, no matter what may be the situation or circumstances, must always be clear to the mind.

Following the classification and differentiation of spiritual phenomena, the student may take up the problem of the organization of the spiritual. Evidently, the spiritual in man, if it is to become cumulatively effective and reach a high stage of development, must be organized with those ends in view. Just how such organization is to be effected is a matter, however, which cannot

be determined without a better knowledge of the spiritual than is now available. Individuals here and there have, it is true, made attempts in this direction, so far as their own life was concerned, and some of them met with a fair degree of success. It would seem that some individuals possess an intuitive insight that is almost uncanny in its reach and accuracy, and in such cases a few data will go a long way. But the average person, in order to attain spiritual effectiveness, needs a conscious self-discipline and correlation of spiritual impulses, and this can hardly come to any satisfactory results without sure knowledge as to what he is about. In its absence, his spiritually motivated efforts become hit-or-miss affairs, made blindly and in the vague hope that good may somehow come of them. Concerted efforts at spiritual promotion have been of the same haphazard variety. Sometimes the results were good, and sometimes not, and the cumulative effect, so far as positive spiritual benefits were concerned, was small. Spiritual organization is probably the outstanding need at the present stage of human development. The gross sum of spiritual forces and activities actually present in the world to-day is larger, probably, than ever before in human history. Yet, somehow, these forces and activities are comparatively ineffective. In society, biological and social factors have remained dominant. In the individual, in spite of his best intentions, a similar outcome has been the usual result, much to the individual's own distress. The truth is that most of the spiritual efforts made have been wasted through lack of proper

coördination and direction. That is, the necessary organization of the spiritual within the person and of the spiritual forces in society has been lacking. To work out an adequate way by which such organization can be effected will be the final but by no means least important task of the investigation which we have here described as the Science of the Spiritual.

There still remains, of course, the application of the knowledge we have spoken of in outline. The spiritual must be actually evoked and developed in the individual and made effective in his living, and it must be made actually dominant in society. Such work, however, belongs to the domain of art—it is the life-task of the men and the women who have undertaken to be ministers, teachers and spiritual leaders of all kinds whatsoever. And art, in the last analysis, is something that each person has to learn for himself. However, an adequate knowledge of the Science of the Spiritual will, in the case of any leader, go a long way toward making his art effective and fruitful.

CHAPTER IX

OUTLINES OF THE NEW GOSPEL

Now we must take up a vital matter which has caused grave concern to such as are not yet fully convinced as to the adequacy of the new Christianity. Such persons will readily agree that the social aims of Christianity must be of some such sort as we have outlined; they will not find it difficult to see the need of a more complete and better-authenticated knowledge of the spiritual, as suggested in the last chapter; they may even see the necessity of adopting the humanistic outlook, that Christianity may be in accord with the larger knowledge of to-day; but, they will ask, what, apart from problems, does the new Christianity have to give to the people—what comfort, what inspiration, what assurance of better things to come; in a word, what gospel does it have to offer?

It must be remembered that not all individuals have yet reached the world-wide vision which mature Christianity implies; not all are filled with Christian zeal to make the world of man over according to more spiritual patterns. But there are many struggling souls who have become aware of some serious lack in their lives, and one which ordinary expedients cannot supply.

Many are approaching the latter years of their lives with a haunting sense of failure. Others, still in their youth, are looking around for something to put meaning into the apparently meaningless confusion which, so far, is all that life has been to them. With all such persons, if religion is to be anything at all, it must be a strictly personal matter. It must have something to give to them. In a word, a gospel is needed.

As we have seen, the gospel which we used to hear preached in the days of our grandfathers, and of which echoes here and there may be heard yet, is one which can no longer be taken seriously by the modern mind. It is a gospel of escape from an evil world by aid of some supernatural agency. The ideas upon which that gospel is built will not stand the test of modern criticism. Moreover, it is not escape that the people want. The thing desired is self-realization. People have learned to appreciate and to love the world they are now in, but they have not yet learned to live in it in a way that will bring them true and lasting satisfaction. The thing they are missing is life—life measuring up to the promise of it, as seen in hints and glimpses at the moments when it is at its best.

If one takes the trouble to skip the various developments of the Christian religion during its long history as the spiritual side of an institution, and goes back to the early founders of the movement, he will come across the following statement, put in the mouth of Jesus himself: "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." That statement

sounds surprisingly modern; there is nothing about it to suggest a religion of escape. It may be that the Christianity of to-day, with its stress upon the life that now is, is not as far removed from the intentions of the founders of the movement as was the religion of our forefathers, with its doctrine of the hopelessness of all things human.

However that may be, modern Christianity does have a gospel to offer, and it is a gospel which has to do with life, with life as we know it and as it is lived upon the earth. The substance of this gospel is, "Ye may have life, and ye may have it more abundantly."

The first point stressed by the new gospel is the presence of unused possibilities in every life. Man's sorrow is his incompleteness, and the apparent hopelessness of it. In Kipling's tale, the Flint-worker asked Puck, "Old One, why is it that men desire so greatly, and can do so little?" That question touches the heart of the human problem. Desires so outrun achievements that not a tithe of them can ever be satisfied, and even such as are satisfied are likely to prove disappointing. There is, of course, something deceiving about the multiplication of desires, since a single unsupplied need may give rise to an endless number of them. Man's incompleteness must, then, not be measured by the number of his unfulfilled desires. But it is indicated by their presence. There is *something* lacking; and the absence of that something is frequently sufficient to create a clinging sense of failure or futility which acts as a poison of slow but increasing virulence to the best

that is in the person. It is as though every human individual were pursuing an impossible dream, enthusiastically at first, and then, as the hard facts of life are one by one brought home to his consciousness, with less and less zeal, until finally the dream is given up in disappointment and bitterness. Many individuals, however, do not reach that last stage. Some keep on trying as long as they live; others, seeing the trend of things early, content themselves in cultivating the little garden-plot of possibilities which seems to them within easy reach, trying to forget all that lies beyond. But, however philosophically some of them may take it, the fact remains that, to most people, life remains deplorably incomplete. To all such, Christianity comes with its message that there still remains available to them a broad margin of unused possibilities.

The trouble with the average individual is that he looks in the wrong place for the things which are to make life worth while to him. Schooled thoroughly in the importance of physical and social values, he thinks it is in these directions that the good things of life must lie. Spiritual values are to him a vague domain, more or less to be desired, no doubt, but not to be compared with the "more substantial" values which all the world seeks and treasures. No doubt there are persons for whom physical and social values suffice. The question concerning the meaning of life has never risen in their minds. For such, modern Christianity has no message. They must be allowed to take their course, or restrained by force, if necessary. In modern civilized lands, how-

ever, this is not the rule. The spiritual need is there, its driving power is strong; only, it is poorly recognized and ill understood. Little provision has been made for its satisfaction, and that, usually, is in unattractive forms. The mind of the ages has been set on physical and social values. For these, every provision has been made, except, it would sometimes seem, the right one. And the right provision for even these will not be fully made until spiritual values receive their due from society as a whole. But to continue our main line of thought—seeing that practically all the arrangements of society are for the development and maintenance of physical and social values, it is natural for the average mind to think in those terms only, and, even when driven by a spiritual urge, to formulate its desires in those terms still. Driven thus to seek things which are of no actual value to him, the individual finds his problem growing more and more complicated, instead of solved, as he had hoped. The second point stressed by the new gospel, therefore, is that the unused possibilities which, when developed, will add to the meaning and value of life, are in the domain of the spiritual.

It affirms that self-realization, for man, means the integration and expansion of the spiritual within him. If man is essentially a seeker after harmony, insight and creative achievement, his main energies ought to be bent in that direction. Not only that, but his efforts should be so organized as to make for the best and most complete results possible in that sphere. Any close

approach to the ideal in this matter is, of course, impossible at the present time. As we have seen in the last chapter, the whole matter needs to be studied far more systematically and thoroughly than anyone has ever so far attempted. Further, the present organization and trend of civilization are, in the main, against it. Society, as now organized, discourages creative achievement, makes insight increasingly difficult and destroys harmony. However, it makes none of these things quite impossible for the individual, if he has the will to develop his possibilities in them. Its influence with regard to them is, in the main, negative—it does not favor them; its favor is reserved for that which competes with the spiritual for the individual's attention. While, then, it is hardly possible at this stage to attain to anything like perfection in the spiritual, the individual may make considerable advance in it, if he has a mind to. According as he makes such advance, the new gospel assures him, will he realize the demands of his being and discover the true meaning of life.

So far we have been speaking in general terms, which to most persons would have little meaning. Even with inadequate data at its command, the new gospel must be more specific. Just what are the spiritual possibilities which are open to the individual at the present time and under the present circumstances? Some sort of an answer to this question must be made, every care being taken to approach as near as possible to the actual facts in the matter.

First among these possibilities, we may mention that

of a new inner stability and calm. The civilized man's worries, anxieties, fears, nervous haste, and even his sorrows, disappointments and regrets, are due, for the most part, to too close a preoccupation with his own self and that which immediately concerns him. He has no perspective, and so little annoyances seem to him monstrous, little difficulties insurmountable, little failures final and irremediable. What he needs is to get his thought out of himself, away from his own little affairs. He must learn that what he is trying to do is, after all, not as important as he had thought, that it does not matter greatly whether he realize his pet desires or not, that his particular pains and disappointments do not make a great deal of difference in the great world, and not even in his own life, unless he let them. To this end there is nothing so effective as the contemplation of great things—the great world of nature, the seemingly limitless universe of the stars, the course of history through the ages, great men, great thoughts as found in literature, the whole circle of reality, God. Without such detachment, little effective spirituality is possible—the individual must remain a driven slave to his physical and social needs and to the pressure that is brought to bear upon him from the outside. With it, he becomes at once the master of himself, his inner being acquires balance and self-sufficiency, he learns to know the "peace which the world cannot give."

This inner stability and calm by itself, however, is not productive. Moreover, it is likely to come to noth-

ing unless backed up by further achievements. It is merely the prerequisite to further spiritual progress. We will therefore mention another possibility open to every individual, and one which will carry him a long way on the road toward self-realization, if he make use of it. This possibility is that of a new understanding of the human soul. The calm and disinterestedness of detachment having been attained, it is comparatively easy to see other people as they are in themselves, rather than as they are with reference to one's self, or with reference to the society, group or party to which one belongs. This difference in attitude will make an enormous difference in what is seen. A thousand details of behavior in persons, formerly looked upon as offensive and inexcusable, become comprehensible, even likeable, as their relation to the personality as a whole becomes manifest, and a thousand others, still more likeable, stand revealed. Moreover, individuals for the first time appear as spiritual units, centers of worlds of their own, worlds happy or otherwise, according as they have been successful or unsuccessful in dealing with the problems of their being. David Grayson, in his *Adventures in Friendship*, describes the joy of discovery which attended each meeting with friend or stranger after the new attitude had become effective within his own self. The experience was like making so many adventures into new and unexplored continents.

Seeing the human soul, as it looks out at us from other people's eyes or becomes manifest in any of the things they do, is likely to bring about a radical revision

in one's views and attitudes in general. It makes for tolerance, readiness to coöperate, love. Mere physical and social values cease to have the importance that they once had: a new kind of value is taking their place. The way has been prepared for that strange phenomenon which is known only in the human world, and not always there—service without compulsion or thought of reward. The individual who has progressed to the point where such service is his normal procedure in his dealings with fellow-man is not likely to find life meaningless or a failure.

Another possibility is that of a new appreciation of beauty. With one's mind cleared of personal preoccupation and bias, and having learned to live in the atmosphere of the spiritual through one's attitude to fellow-man, forms of beauty will become manifest everywhere in the world round about. It is the self-centered, the preoccupied, the contentious, the worried person who misses the wealth of the world's beauty and the joy of it. On the other hand, the contemplation of beauty as found in common things is one of the easiest and quickest modes of escape from these common human ailments. Like other spiritual gifts, the appreciation of beauty grows with practice. To the person who makes such practice a frequent and regular thing, forgetting for the time being all baser utilitarian considerations, new beauties will be revealed constantly and his life will tend to create a spiritual atmosphere of its own—æsthetic discrimination will become sure, the inner meaning of things will become more clear, a new world,

entirely unknown to the mere utilitarian, will delight and enrich the soul.

It would be strange, if at this point the individual did not find himself fired with zeal to enter the creative field on his own account. The potential artist lurks in every person. Opportunities to do creative work in the artist's spirit are present in almost every task. Moreover, new opportunities in this field may always be made. Much of the man-made world is ugly because the art spirit was absent in its making. Many tasks are uninteresting drudgery because no artist-soul has been occupied in the doing of them. Art does not consist only in the painting of pictures or the carving of statues. All work may be art. And when it becomes such, it is not only the work that is transformed but also the worker. He no longer needs crude, soul-destroying amusements to keep his life interesting. Nor does the work need a watchful overseer to see that it is well done.

Still another possibility is a new insight into truth. Truth is not opinion, handed down to us by our ancestors or by any other established and recognized authority. Nor is truth the measured observations of the senses, tabulated and classified for our convenient use. Still less does truth consist in the impudent vulgarities of iconoclastic radicals. The quest of truth seems to be one of the spiritual man's highest functions, and life may be greatly enriched by its proper performance. But, because of the many false notions current as to what truth consists in, the pursuit of it frequently

becomes a source of impoverishment rather than the opposite. Truth, for man, is a spiritual quality, and has to do with realities and their relations to each other. In a word, truth is the goal of which insight is the approach.

The character of all knowledge is determined by the nature of the knower. The knowledge of the scientist, the knowledge of the atheist, the knowledge of the religious devotee, are all forms of knowledge, and they are all correct, from their particular points of view. But they are not truth—truth lies deeper, and can only be ascertained spiritually by those in whom the spiritual is dominant. It would thus seem that the philosopher can come nearer to the expression of truth than the scientist, and the poet nearer than the philosopher, and the musician or artist nearer than the poet, and the lover of his kind nearer even than these. To be a seeker of truth one does not need to be a worker in books and laboratories. Not that books or laboratories are to be despised: man needs every aid possible to help him out of the realm of appearances into that of realities. But the realities, when ultimately found, will be spiritually discerned.

The truth-seeker, accordingly, must submit himself to all the disciplines of the spiritual, and rise through the various stages of the spiritual step by step. He must know the inner stability and calm which spiritual practice lays as the foundation of all achievement within its sphere. He must know the human soul as it is in itself, no matter what the outward forms which may

clothe and conceal it. He must know the meaning and the joy of service. He must have first-hand acquaintance with the beauty which manifests itself in a million forms round about him. He must have some knowledge of the creative artist's enthusiasm in his work. And, in addition to all this, he must have the breadth of mind which can correlate all that he sees and knows and sense the unity which underlies the whole of it. Yet, however much this may seem, one does not have to be a scholar to achieve it. But it does take years of self-disciplined effort. It is not a task for the profligate or the mentally lazy.

One thing more may well be mentioned in this connection, and that is, spiritual activities of every sort generate new power in the individual. Observers of the members of young and vital religious movements have frequently remarked upon the evidences of unusual power in the lives of those people. Extraordinary ability and endurance were manifested, the most difficult enterprises were cheerfully undertaken and successfully accomplished, life under the severest of circumstances was accepted without complaint, with a certain gaiety even. Such increase of power and consequent gain in the mastery of life are the inevitable result of spiritual enterprise and achievement. The extent of spiritual energy latent in man has never been measured, but, so far as present appearances go, it would seem to be limitless. It is only when this energy is bottled up, and men rely entirely upon the energy of their physical and social selves, that the situations of

life seem too difficult to cope with or too hard to endure. To such as "have faith," nothing is impossible, provided the faith amounts to actual spiritual insight and zeal. Spiritual progress in a person means the release of new reserves of energy, which bring about an increase in power over himself, in influence over others and in actual creative ability.

Such, then, are some of the larger possibilities which the new gospel proclaims. No doubt they have been mentioned before—they, and still others besides. Spiritual achievement is not a new thing in the world. But it is still all too rare a thing, even in the most modern of civilized society. Most individuals have not made any progress in it, or but very little. That is why they fail to understand life or find its problems too much for them. To them, an announcement of the possibilities of the spiritual will still be a gospel, if they can be made to understand and act upon it.

It is not to be supposed that *all* the possibilities of the spiritual have been here enumerated. We have contented ourselves with suggesting a few of the more important of them, seeing that it is not the purpose of this chapter to expound the new gospel, but rather to trace its bare outlines. Its detailed presentation and exposition, in terms that the hearers may understand and appreciate—that is, or ought to be, the main task of the Christian minister.

We must now go on with the consideration of other points which the new gospel stresses. A third one is that self-realization is not a thing that comes of itself,

as a gift out of the skies or elsewhere, but that it can only be the result of conscious effort, persistent and cumulative in its nature. This point has already received some emphasis in our discussion of the unused possibilities which are available to the individual, but it needs special treatment. In times past, there was a strong tendency for people to expect the fruits of the Christian gospel as a free gift, implying no effort save appropriation on their part. To-day there is just as strong a tendency for people to expect all the good things of life and especially the delights of self-realization to flow to them from who knows where while nothing is left for them to do but to enjoy them. Human life is not built on that plan. There is nothing in it for the drifter. It so happens that, while a person is young, the strength of the animal in him is considerable, and likely to act without much conscious mental coöperation. It is therefore easy to give undue sway to the animal urges and to receive a certain amount of satisfaction from their exercise. To the youthful, self-realization often means nothing more than that. If so, one may say that there is something automatic about it—at least, it is the line of least resistance. But the realizing is soon complete, and disillusionment follows, not to speak of the inevitable penalties which come from the over-indulgence of the physical. Social self-realization also may come fairly easy, that is, if one is favorably situated from the beginning, as many are not. But social self-realization will not long satisfy, unless the person is of a very shallow nature. Social position,

correct manners and opinions, influence and dominance in the affairs of one's group, ability to display and be admired—what do all of these amount to, if life has nothing more to give? They also lead to disillusionment, while the penalties which follow the misdeeds often resorted to in social climbing may be very severe. There is only one kind of self-realization which, for man, is really worthy of the name, and that is all-round self-realization, with the spiritual in the dominant place. To accomplish it is a life-task. For full success, one must begin early, and keep consciously at it the remainder of his days. Otherwise the doors of opportunity may close one by one, and the unused possibilities become unusable.

For there is such a thing as spoiling one's chances. It has often been observed that, as a person grows older, he tends to become set in his ways. His habits become fixed, his thinking tends to follow definite grooves, his appreciation becomes a limited power, confined to certain definite types of things, his capacity for new kinds of adventure shrinks to the vanishing point. Unless the spiritual has received strong and effective attention before the days of decline are reached, the chances are that it never will receive much attention at all. But even apart from this, many valuable possibilities may be spoiled permanently even while one is still in his youth. Where, in the pursuit of social or animal aims, persistent violence is done to such spiritual sensibilities as one may have, those sensibilities may be permanently impaired, even crowded out of the field of

consciousness altogether by the more brutish notions with which they have been forcibly associated. When the old-time gospeler spoke of the taint of sin, he was talking of something real. It is possible to so besmirk one's mind with ideas and imaginations unworthy of a human being that good thoughts become next to impossible. And there is nothing anywhere that can wash such a mind "white as snow." It must always remain soiled, though some improvement can be made, if the treatment applied be thorough enough and applied early enough. There can be no question but the best of human beings, as one finds them to-day, suffer some impairment of their spiritual capacities from this cause.

However, the new gospel will not admit that any individual's case is hopeless, if he can be made to realize his need of the spiritual. No matter how old a person, no matter how many of his chances have been spoiled through his misdeeds or ignorance, it may always be assumed that there remains something in him which it is worth while to develop. It is not impossible that what a man may be able to accomplish in the last year or even the last day of his life will be enough to change the dominant note of his entire career from one of failure to one of success. Such may be the case, however, only if the man himself is roused to an appreciation of the need, which does not always happen.

The new gospel puts a high value on freedom. Its emphasis, however, is not on the removal of restraints, such as are imposed by society upon its members for its own safety and welfare, as well as for the safety

and welfare of the members themselves. So long as a person is dominated by aims which are physical or social in their nature, he needs to be restrained. It is sometimes assumed that as people grow in reason, they will tend more and more to do the right thing by others, even from motives of self-interest. This may be true to some extent, but the main effect of intellectual education in this matter seems to be that subtler and more far-reaching forms of exploitation, domination, etc., are substituted for the cruder and less-efficient forms of the same thing in less-sophisticated societies. The mind is after all but the servant of the man, and what the man desires, that it is that the mind strives to attain. The only person who does not need external restraints to his conduct is the one who has made the spiritual dominant in every sphere of his life. He needs no such restraints because he is able to govern himself in the interests of all; and not only is he able to so govern himself, but he is also willing and even anxious to do so. The new gospel, therefore, points the way to a life that is capable of freedom, rather than to a loosening of external restraints which may lead to social and personal disaster.

Inner freedom is, after all, the only real freedom. The thing that counts in man is whether or not he is the master of his own thought and effort. If self-realization, in the last analysis, is mainly spiritual, and if the spiritual cannot be developed to any satisfying degree of effectiveness without self-mastery and self-direction, everything that is worth while in a man

depends on such self-mastery. And, if such self-mastery has been attained, the man is free. In all things really essential, he knows what he wants to do and why he wants to do them, and he does them. Such external restraints as there are do not greatly trouble him. He can conform with them and still be free in everything that really matters.

Since the spiritual is, so far as we can see, limitless, there is no limit to the self-realization possible to those who make that their aim in life. That is, there is no limit save the one set by human mortality. Men must die, and death, so far as we now know, puts an end to their self-realization. However, there is no proof that the life of the individual does not continue in other forms and circumstances after death. Indeed, that it does so has been a long-cherished hope. What does the new gospel have to say on that point?

Very little. The new gospel is concerned with the life that we know. The life that we know is very much worth developing. For its proper cultivation, it needs all of our attention. To dream and speculate about worlds to come is a kind of dissipation which may easily destroy a person's effectiveness in the present world, actually sapping the spirituality which it might be supposed to promote. Still, the new gospel would go to the length of predicting that, if there should be such a thing as continued life after death, it will be the individuals whose spiritual development in the present life has gone farthest that will be best fitted to carry on that continued life. It might even be the case that

only such as have achieved a strong spiritual development in the present life shall be able to carry on the continued life at all. However, it is with the possibilities and problems of the present life that man is normally concerned, and it is the only life that he has any knowledge of.

That does not say that the individual of to-day should not have any interest in the future—even the far-distant future. The new gospel stresses the importance of the future, meaning thereby the future of man on the earth. Whatever the individual of to-day is or does counts toward the building of that future. It is important, then, that he keep the future in mind as well as the present, that he should think of the welfare of generations yet to be born as well as that of his own. The new gospel, if it is to be fully satisfying, must hold forth the prospect of a better world as well as of a better life for the individual. The spiritual in a man cannot grow very far without developing a concern for those who are yet to come. On the other hand, if the individual is able to feel that what he is doing now is a constructive part in a vast and infinitely worthwhile task which it will take a thousand generations to complete, he needs little more to urge him on to his very best efforts, and his life itself will be enriched by the thought of it. The new gospel for the individual, therefore, is inseparably bound up with what we have already spoken of as the Social Aim of Christianity.

CHAPTER X

STANDARDS OF THE NEW CHRISTIANITY

THE new Christianity includes not only a gospel and a world program, but also a rule of life. Since the very beginning, Christianity has set up standards of life and conduct, sometimes as ideals for individuals to strive toward, sometimes as laws to which they must conform. The Hebrew "Ten Commandments" were adopted by the Christians as obligatory, but these were no more than a nucleus of the extensive assortment of obligations which it was considered necessary to assume in order to attain salvation. These obligations, of course, varied in number and character at different times and among different groups. By the nineteenth century, they had developed into a code, or series of codes, very far removed indeed from the intentions of the original founder of the religion. Then came a general questioning of all traditional standards. The Christian codes were widely condemned as inadequate and wrongly based. Their dissolution was rapid, and no more than fragments are left of them to-day. Even the fragments show signs of decay.

But it is evident that individuals and societies must have standards to guide their conduct by. Otherwise nothing but chaos would be possible. Something approaching such chaos is actually to be seen in sections

of modern society, especially in those parts of it where the influence of the old Christian standards is weakest, or where their validity is denied altogether. However, as the new Christianity makes its way more fully into the general consciousness of the civilized peoples, this danger will be removed. The new Christianity has standards of its own. They are not less exacting, but more so, than the standards of the past. On the other hand, they are more sensible, more discriminating, more in accord with human nature and need than were the standards of the past. Being built on true human values, as these are understood to-day, they make a stronger appeal to the modern individual than did many of the past standards, which were often quite arbitrary. The new standards are not, however, altogether new. At many points they resemble those of the past, and they are properly to be regarded rather as a revised and enlarged edition of the old than as something entirely new and different.

Generally, in talking of standards in connection with religion, moral standards alone are meant. But every religion has other standards also, and the new Christianity, seeing that it is seriously concerned with everything human, is as emphatic in its stress on some of them as it is in its stress on the matter of morals. The matter of morals, however, is by no means slighted. Rather, their sphere is enlarged, so that questions of right and wrong are introduced among activities and practices which used to be considered morally indifferent.

It would be impossible here to treat the moral standards of the new Christianity exhaustively. A brief discussion, however, may be ventured upon, so long as we keep in mind that it must necessarily fail to cover everything that morality to-day implies.

One of the first principles of the new morality is that it applies everywhere, in all circumstances and relations. There is no room left for one kind of morality at home and another kind abroad, nor is it permissible to make the least modification in the standards as one passes from one's own group, society, social stratum, race or nation to another. Another important point is that the purpose of Christianity's moral scale is not to furnish a means by which one may measure other people. The Christian rule in judging other people, if they must be judged at all, is charity. The moral standards we shall presently enumerate are standards for the Christian individual's own self-guidance. Even he, be he ever so capable, need not expect to attain perfection in them. The limitations of human nature, of education and culture, of environment and of the individual's own achievement all have their part in making his efforts fall short of the ideal. A healthy humility is therefore always a virtue. On the other hand, slackness with regard to the standards, whether on account of the hopelessness of attaining perfection in them, or on account of the apparent slackness of others, or on account of pure moral laziness, is, to the Christian, one of the blackest of vices.

The standards themselves are easily classifiable into two groups, according as they, on the one hand, make

for efficiency in the individual as an all-round human being, or, on the other hand, as they make for efficiency in the individual as a member of society. One might designate the two groups as personal standards and social standards. The division, however, must not be regarded as absolute, since the social standards are necessarily personal also, in that they must be the standards of the person and will ultimately make for personal values, and the personal standards have social value also, as they are the basis upon which an individual becomes socially useful. Still, the standards of the one group have immediate reference to the government of one's own self, while those of the other group have immediate reference to one's conduct in society. We will here set down a partial and tentative list of the standards in each group:

<i>Personal</i>	<i>Social</i>
Self-control	Orderliness
Decency	Politeness
Self-reliance	Honesty
Balance	Justice
Ambition	Usefulness
Courage	Loyalty
Prudence	Dependability
Endurance	Tolerance
Cheerfulness	Kindness
Idealism	Reverence

It will be noticed that there is a close correspondence between the standards of the one group and those of the other. No doubt it is true that, in the case of

each corresponding pair of standards, there is underlying them a single spiritual value. The two then would, in each case, be no more than different aspects of the same thing. However, for purposes of personal guidance, they had best be mentioned separately.

A little explanation, as to just what is meant or implied by the various qualities mentioned, will not be out of place at this point. We shall first take the personal group. Self-control implies a restraint of the passions, so that they may never get the better of the individual's reason or of the finer impulses of the personality. It is sometimes spoken of as sobriety, and may be considered as the antithesis of all forms of intoxication, hysteria or emotional excess. Decency, as a personal standard, stands as the opposite of animalism. Certain animal functions, such as those of sex, nourishment, elimination, etc., are necessary to man, but it is neither necessary nor desirable to abandon one's self to them so completely as to forget the demands of the higher elements in one's own being or the sensibilities and rights of others. Decency implies that such demands, sensibilities and rights be in every case respected. Self-reliance, as a Christian standard, implies many things. In the first place, it refers to the desirability of every individual's standing on his own feet, so to speak; that is, of assuming the responsibility for his own welfare, of refusing to lean too much on the kindness of others, of earning his own way in the world. In the second place, self-reliance implies the willingness and ability to take the hard knocks, the

inconveniences and the annoyances of life on a par with the rest of one's fellows, without claiming any special favors or exemptions. And then, self-reliance implies moral independence, which is nothing other than the ability to continue according to one's own notions of right and wrong, no matter what others may be doing. The three qualities so far mentioned, self-control, decency and self-reliance, are fundamental: without a considerable degree of excellence in them, an individual is likely to become either a public nuisance or a public charge, or both. If one would measure up to the Christian standards, an even higher degree of perfection in them than ordinarily considered necessary is required.

For the making of a really successful personality, additional qualities are needed, and Christianity has high standards with regard to all of them. One of these is balance. Since the needs and interests of the individual include various items on each of the three levels, physical, social and spiritual, it is evident that, to attain to a full, all-round development, he must so order his life and activities as to give to each need or interest its due. When this is done, we may call his personality balanced. Otherwise it is one-sided and consequently inefficient for the purposes of life. To measure up to the Christian standard of ambition, it is necessary for the person to be moved by a persistent desire to accomplish something worth while in the world. There is no place in modern Christianity for the ambitionless. Christianity also calls for a high degree of courage. In a sense, Christianity *is* courage—the courage to pursue

the worth while even when the odds against one are very great, and when one meets with opposition from the outside rather than encouragement. On the other hand, Christianity also calls for prudence. Blind courage which rushes into enterprises without any regard for consequences is not countenanced by the religion of to-day. The new Christianity demands rational action always, that is, action that has due regard for the all-round welfare of both the individual himself and such other human beings as may be affected by his action. Such due regard is what we mean by prudence. Endurance has always counted as a Christian virtue, and we need not enlarge on the subject here. It might be well to say that it is still as important a quality for the spiritually successful life as it ever was. More needs to be said of the Christian standard of cheerfulness. The notion has somehow gotten abroad that, in order to be a Christian, one needs to be gloomy. The exact opposite is the case. Gloom, sourness, bitterness and the like are, from the Christian standpoint, sin. Not only are they socially undesirable, but they destroy the spiritual efficiency of the individual himself. Under this head we may mention also the soul-destroying effects of hate, jealousy and vengefulness. All of them are so many failures to measure up to the Christian standard of cheerfulness. Finally, for personal efficiency, Christianity demands idealism. Idealism may be briefly defined as the tendency in a person to rate spiritual values high—in fact, to give them dominance over all other values in his life.

Among the social group of standards which Christianity demands of those who hold to it, the first is orderliness. In relation to his social group, society or nation, the Christian is markedly law-abiding. Even when it becomes necessary to oppose established law, he prefers to do it in an orderly, socially satisfactory manner. Mob atrocities, law-breaking and other irresponsible activities are contrary to the Christian spirit. As regards politeness, Christianity lifts it out of the domain of mere manners, and places it into the sphere of morals. What matters here, of course, is not the superficial forms of behavior toward one's fellows, but the attitude prompting the behavior. Christian standards demand that one's conduct in every case be such as is prompted or attended by a full respect for the personality of the person dealt with. Side by side with the standard of politeness stands that of honesty. This requires that the truth be told, that all dealings be frank and in the open, and that the individual refuse to take any advantage or benefit at the expense of a lie, deceit or trickery. In all of the three matters mentioned, orderliness, politeness and honesty, Christian standards are very high—higher than the actual attainments of many individuals who have called themselves Christian. However, there is no excuse for any Christian falling short in any of these qualities. Even those who do not pretend to be Christian must measure up to the standards at least partially, or organized society would be impossible.

Christianity, however, has still further social require-

ments to make of the individual. Outstanding among these is justice, sometimes called fairness. Justice means to give the other person his due, no matter who that other person may be. From the Christian standpoint, to give the other person his due means to give him his due as a human being, which includes everything in the way of respect, opportunity, etc., that the individual expects or hopes for himself. Justice, for the Christian, means a strict application of the Golden Rule in all his dealings. This, again, is a standard of which the actual practice of many so-called Christians has fallen far short. And, again, we must say that there is no excuse for any Christian's failing to measure up to it. The standard of usefulness immediately follows that of justice, and is, in a sense, a corollary of it. Strict justice demands of every man that he be useful to his fellows. But social usefulness, to the Christian, ought to be more than a duty; it should appeal to him with somewhat of the force of a passion. Indeed, a person can hardly be called a Christian otherwise, since one of the main earmarks of the religion is the eagerness to serve. The standard of loyalty, greatly stressed in primitive society and in the cruder forms of civilized society, also has its place in Christianity. Loyalty to one's group, society or nation is required, but it must be a discriminating loyalty. Treachery to one's own is never admissible, but support may and should be withheld, provided it is done openly, in case group, society or nation is violating the higher interests of humanity in its pursuits. If the fault is continuous, it becomes

the Christian duty of the individual to renounce his group and sever connections with it altogether. However, ordinarily the need for this does not arise, and the demands of the standard of loyalty remain unaffected. Another Christian standard is that of dependability. This refers to the willingness and ability to take one's full part in the social task and to see that part through to successful completion. Another word for it is responsibility. The shirking of one's duties is not consistent with Christianity. Nor, indeed, is it consistent with a successful social order of any kind.

The social standards so far mentioned are now generally accepted as essential to any well-regulated society, but modern Christianity has still others, not so generally recognized, which it regards equally important with the rest in the creation of a satisfactory human society. The first one of these, but recently admitted to Christianity, is the standard of tolerance. Tolerance, in the Christian sense, implies respect for the other person; that is its chief foundation, exactly as in the case of Christian politeness. Tolerance means to bear with equanimity the presence of attitudes, opinions and loyalties in other persons which differ from one's own. To a person zealous for his cause to the point of making almost any sacrifice for it, such tolerance is often difficult. Among Christians it has certainly proved so. But the new Christianity demands it as a rule which admits of no exception. The sacredness of human personality is the one fact which outshadows every other fact. Only where that personality becomes an actual

menace to the well-being of other personalities may it be forcibly dealt with, and then only in such matters as fall within the province of the state. In other cases, the demand of Christianity is that it be treated with all due respect. Kindness is another of the Christian qualities. It goes farther than tolerance, in that it is positive, active. It goes farther also than justice, which is, or may be, emotionally neutral. In kindness, the heart goes along with one's good deeds in his relations with his fellows. The Christian standard demands that such kindness characterize all one's social dealings, and, further, that the individual go out of his way to do kindnesses whenever opportunity offers itself or can be created. The standard of reverence refers to the sacred things of humanity. Sacred things always imply the presence of the spiritual in the person to whom they are sacred. However the things themselves may appear to the Christian individual, his own religion demands an attitude of respect in their presence—they are associated with the soul of man, and thus with the very highest that can be known.

One difference may be noted between the moral standards of the new Christianity and those of past times. There are no specific commands or prohibitions. If one looks, for instance, at the historic Ten Commandments, he will find such items as these: "Thou shalt not kill; thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not commit adultery; thou shalt not covet." The new moral standards are not that specific, and for good reason. The person who measures up to the standards of self-control,

decency, orderliness, politeness, honesty, justice, and so on will not kill, steal, or engage in any of the rest of the undesirable activities. That is, not under ordinary circumstances. Circumstances, however, may arise in which the technical breach of some old-time commandment becomes one's Christian duty. In that case, the modern Christian would entertain no scruples, where the former Christian might have worried over the matter the rest of his life. Moreover, a great many of the specific standards of past times have been proven quite irrational; yet, because they have stood as Christian standards, many people have tried to live up to them, though it was against their best judgment. All that, and even the possibility of it, will be eliminated by the more general nature of the standards of to-day.

Another fact that may be evident to the reader is that the moral standards of the new Christianity do not include anything that is peculiar to historic Christianity. The qualities that are included are to be found in peoples who may never have heard of Christianity. Furthermore, there are individuals to-day trying to live up to them, or, at least, to some of them, who make no pretensions to Christianity, and who may even regard themselves as opposed to Christianity. That is all as it should be. Christianity has adopted as its moral standards those which will make for the highest human welfare, both in the individual and in society. The value of these standards may, in some cases, have been discovered independently of Christianity, and there would be nothing strange in their being recognized by indi-

viduals who do not see the value of the Christian movement as a whole. That, however, does not greatly trouble the modern Christian. What he is concerned about is not names, but substance.

We have already pointed out the fact that moral standards, however important they may be, are not the only standards stressed by the Christianity of to-day. Mistakes costly to the human spirit may be made in various domains of human interest, and yet the perpetrators of them, in many instances, be anything but morally blameworthy. They may be moved by the very highest of motives. To make a good world, therefore, more than morals is needed, and the new Christianity, which is above all things concerned about the making of a good world, has exacting standards in other matters.

We may mention here its religious standards, its philosophical standards, and its æsthetic standards. All three of these groups are rather closely related, so that a standard in one group may readily be matched with a corresponding standard in another. The reason is clear. The new Christianity represents a total and unified attitude toward life and the world, and so tends to give its own color or slant to everything that its adherent is, thinks or does. Similar culture unities may be observed in the Christianity of past times, at various stages of its growth. If we take the Christianity of the Middle Ages, at the period when the Medieval genius was at its height, we find that every outstanding feature of the then-existing civilization had taken its color from

it, and that the same spiritual motive ran through every achievement. The Gothic cathedral, the crusades, the romances of King Arthur and his knights, the theory of the Holy Roman Empire and the splendidly logical edifice of Medieval theology were all of one piece; representing, all of them, the same fundamental characteristics. All of them were splendidly conceived, daringly and yet carefully executed, logically complete, but so out of touch with the actual facts of experience as to be nothing short of monstrous. The new Christianity will undoubtedly make for a similar cultural unity in the years that are to come, but the results will be far different—as far different as the spirit of the Christianity of to-day is different from that of the religion eight or nine hundred years ago.

The spirit of present-day religion is best to be seen in its standards. We will here make some attempt at tabulating these, as they relate to the three spheres of interest that we have mentioned:

<i>Religious Standards</i>	<i>Philosophical Standards</i>	<i>Æsthetic Standards</i>
Rationality	Accuracy	Realism
Spirituality	Comprehensiveness	Idealism
Humanity	Pragmatic	Universality
Progressive Quality	Adequacy	Freedom
	Open-mindedness	

The Christianity of to-day recognizes the spiritual value of the religions of the past, and is willing to admit even the present usefulness of some of them, in the case of culturally backward peoples or individuals.

As regards its own self, however, its standards are very strict. And they are very different, for the most part, from the standards of past religions. The standard of rationality implies a complete reasonableness, according to the light of present-day knowledge. Religion, of course, is faith, rather than knowledge, but in no case does the new Christianity admit the validity of any faith that contradicts ascertained knowledge, at least not so far as it does contradict such knowledge. Moreover, even in matters which lie entirely beyond knowledge, faith, or perhaps we should say fancy, is not given free scope. Even there, modern religion admits of nothing but what is *probable*, in the light of modern knowledge. Thus there is ruled out a vast amount of superstition, much of which still maintains a lingering existence in the so-called Christian lands. All notions of magic, of the special efficacy of certain formulas, rites or ceremonies, and so on, are disowned as unreasonable and barbarous. The same thing is true with regard to the special sacredness of certain objects, times, places, books, offices or doctrines. That some of these things may have spiritual value, is not denied, but the value is assumed to lie in the attitude of the person concerned, and not in the things themselves. The standard of spirituality refers to the motives and expression of religion. Purely physical or social motives are regarded as inadmissible in the religious attitude. Formerly, any kind of motive was accepted as proper in religion. Even the thief went to his shrine in order to pray for God's blessing on his enterprise. The new

Christianity considers only the soul's aspirations after harmony, insight and creative power as legitimate motives within the religious sphere. Similarly, in the expression of religion, while all kinds of material, physical or social means may be brought into service, the thing to be thus manifested can properly be none other than some spiritual value. It will be seen that this discrimination will rule out of religious practice everything that in previous religions has had a degrading or limiting influence upon man and was unworthy of the human spirit. The standard of humanity serves to keep religion in accord with actual human need. It implies that man and his need always receive first consideration in all of its aspirations and practices. It is because of this standard that we call modern religion humanistic. Finally, the new Christianity, if it is to remain true to itself, must retain its progressive quality. No achievement, belief, valuation, practice or institution may be looked upon as final. No height reached by religious effort but must be regarded only as a step to greater heights.

In actual life, religion is always closely interrelated with philosophy. We may speak here of philosophy as the sum total of one's intellectual view of the world. While not necessarily the determiner of all of one's desires or actions, a person's philosophy is the basis of all of his reasoning, and its character determines of what sort his reasoning shall be. As one goes up in the scale of civilization, the reasoning faculty becomes increasingly important. When a state of culture such

as we know to-day is reached, it might almost be said that reason has become all-important, since there does not seem to remain a single traditional rule or method which may safely be followed without previous investigation. It is apparent, then, that the kind of philosophy a person carries with him is a very important matter indeed in the life of to-day. And modern Christianity has certain very definite standards with regard to it.

In the first place, accuracy is insisted upon, accuracy being understood to mean close conformity with the facts. Of course, absolute accuracy in philosophy is impossible: that would imply absolute knowledge. Modern scientific study, however, has minutely and critically examined many broad fields of human experience, and thus made something like an approach to exactness in thought possible. Moreover, the methods of philosophy have been examined, so that considerable advance has been made toward the elimination of mistakes in the thought process itself. In view of all that has been accomplished in these directions, the great mass of the opinions and world-views of past times, uncritically built on unfounded assumptions and hasty generalizations, appear naïve and inadequate. With such loose thinking and inadequate world views, the new Christianity is not content. Even the soundest possible knowledge leaves room for grave errors of judgment, but the danger is multiplied many times where such knowledge as is available is disregarded. Hence the insistence on accuracy in philosophy—as high a degree of accuracy as is possible. In some quarters,

however, the zeal for accuracy has become so dominant that another quality of great importance to philosophy has been sacrificed. To build a philosophy adequate for all the purposes of life, *all* the facts, interests, and experiences of human life and its environment must be taken into account. If one admits to his view only a part of the phenomena which have come to man's attention, it does not matter how accurate his observations within the selected sphere may be, his philosophy will be wrong. This, however, has happened again and again in the case of individuals who were bent on scientific accuracy. The new Christianity, therefore, emphasizes the standard of comprehensiveness. The philosophy it demands in its adherents is one based upon the whole experience of man, and not merely a selected part of it. Another standard is that of pragmatic adequacy. According to the Christian viewpoint, philosophy's outstanding purpose is to help man to live; that is, philosophy is a tool, the use of which is to guide persons and societies to right living, or, as we have put it, to self-realization. In cases where there is some doubt as to the nature of the facts, the presumption, then, must always be in favor of that view which best promotes man's self-realization. Moreover, the whole trend of the philosophy must be the same, or it is to be considered false. Man had better have no philosophy at all than content himself with one that works against his own highest interests. At any rate, no philosophy can be final. Every advance in knowledge and experience requires readjustments in one's

thought system. The standard of open-mindedness is, therefore, to be kept constantly in view. Else dogmatism will creep in, and dogmatism is the foe of truth, as well as of progress.

To explain the æsthetic standards of the new Christianity is difficult, owing to the vagueness and inadequacy of the terms which must be used. But such standards exist, and they are very different from the æsthetic standards which prevail in some circles of modern society. What is beautiful? is a question which may be answered variously. This is especially true when it comes to man-made beauty; that is, art. There man is in complete control, since he is both the creator and the one who appreciates. As the artist, therefore, so is his art. Further, art has its influence in the lives of people other than the artist, both in his own generation and in succeeding generations. The artist thus ranks as one of the makers of civilization. Christianity, which is intensely interested in the kind of civilization we are to have, is very much concerned as regards the sort of art which the artist will produce. It therefore has standards in the matter.

We will designate the first standard as realism. As used here, the word means conformity to reality. Not only that, but, more specifically, it means conformity to reality as that appears to the enlightened Christian consciousness of to-day. If this is a world of law and order, if the senses may be trusted to give one the essential features of the external aspects of things, if, in

the human sphere, the spiritual must be dominant over the physical and the social in order that life may be satisfying, the art of the times should manifest these facts. Judged by this standard, cubism, futurism, impressionism and who knows what other absurdities in the realm of painting and sculpture, various kinds of enormities and atrocities in the sphere of architecture, jazz and similar nonsense in music, mockery and irreverence in criticism, and pessimism, automatism, obscenity or unregulated fancy in literature, are un-Christian. They do not represent the realities of life as the Christian knows them, but seem to him rather as the inventions of an insane asylum, highly artificial, lawless, monstrous. The new Christianity also lays special stress on the standard of idealism. A true realistic art is, in the nature of the case, idealistic, since man himself is idealistic at least in part. But, to the Christian viewpoint, art should represent the highest known to man, and should therefore be even more idealistic than is life itself at its present stage. That is, it should be uniformly idealistic, where life is only occasionally so. If art does not strive to represent in visible form the best that man knows, it has lost its usefulness to man and becomes a menace to human welfare rather than an aid to living. Christianity also demands universality in art; that is, universality of appeal. If the virtues of any form of art have become so fine-spun that an expert is needed at one's elbow in order to understand or appreciate them, there is something

wrong with the art. Any art that is worth while to man is self-revealing and self-explanatory, not a thing for experts and specialists, but a thing for everybody. It is true, of course, that the individual of less developed or impaired spiritual personality can appreciate less than the individual whose spirituality is sound and well advanced, but that is quite another matter. The standard of freedom in connection with art refers to matters both of form and of content. Modern Christianity looks upon man as a growing creature—advancing in mind and in spirit. All his works need to grow with him; to limit their growth is to check his progress. If, therefore, art should become purely traditional, afraid to make any further modifications or advance, it would lose its usefulness to man and therefore its reason for existence. Freedom to develop new forms and to introduce new content into art forms must be maintained as one of the basic requirements of human welfare. However, this last point does not need much stressing at the present time.

No doubt Christianity has still other standards, besides the ones we have mentioned. In fact, it must be so, since the religion has standards with regard to everything that in any way concerns man. To raise the life of the individual and of the world, as nearly as possible, up to these standards is what Christianity regards as its task. Such uplift, however, is in no case to be accomplished by compulsion; indeed, it could not be accomplished by compulsion. Man must learn for himself what is best for him. All that Christianity as

a movement can do in the matter is to help him to learn. Still, to render adequate service in this limited manner even, is no small undertaking. The remaining chapters of the book will consider the problem as it now stands.

CHAPTER XI

THE CHURCH IN THE NEW AGE

CHRISTIANITY, whether old or new, will not grow of itself. To achieve any extension of its influence, or even to retain such influence as it now possesses, it must be actively promoted. The reason is evident. In general, man tends to follow the line of least resistance. His long animal ancestry, his age-long adherence to cultural patterns furnished him by tradition, the comparative recency of the spiritual development in his life, the ill-formed and poorly organized character of that side of him—all point toward a strong tendency, in him, to revert to purely materialistic and social activities and aims. It is only in the exceptional individual that the spiritual has grown strong enough to become dominant, and independent enough to pursue its ends regardless of influences and pressures tending to the contrary. It has been these exceptional individuals who have kept the rest of their kind alive to their spiritual need, stimulating, interpreting, organizing, directing, and so keeping the wheel of progress moving. Should these leaders give up their task as hopeless and retire within themselves, leaving the world to its fate, it is possible that the spiritual aims of the human race might even yet be defeated.

While the institutional activities of Christianity have, at times, been anything but spiritual in motive or effect, the religion itself, where genuine, has been essentially a spiritual matter from the beginning. In the case of the new Christianity, it is preëminently such. If, therefore, it is to prevail in modern society, it is not enough that scattered individuals here and there adopt it as the rule and inspiration of their own personal lives, but there needs to be some active and well-organized promotion on a large scale and through long periods of time. Otherwise an era of spiritual decay is inevitable; that is, unless some new and more aggressive religion comes in and takes possession of the field.

Up to the present time, the churches have been the main promoters of Christianity. Possibly they will continue to be one of the chief factors in such promotion in the years and centuries that are to come. At any rate, they are at present the only sufficiently extensive and influential form of organization that Christianity has for the furthering of its aims. Just what, from the standpoint of the new Christianity, the churches are capable of accomplishing is accordingly a matter of considerable importance to our study.

At first glance, it is not very encouraging. Christianity is not represented by one church, but by many churches, all of them more or less hostile to each other. It is true that, in recent years, there has been some coöperation, but it has been, for the most part, in superficial matters, or else of a very noncommittal character. Denominational interests are never for a moment lost

sight of, and treachery to the common cause is the rule rather than the exception. The value of inter-church coöperation for the advancement of Christianity may be put down as practically nil. All that can be depended upon, therefore, is what the denominations may accomplish individually.

But here also the outlook is not very promising. The main purpose of the denominations and of the individual congregations of which they are composed seems to be self-aggrandizement. To keep the organization going and to enlarge it seems to be the big aim—almost the sole aim—of both clergy and laity. The methods which are employed to this end are often of such character as would not bear investigation, were they employed by any institution other than the church. In the majority of cases, they are methods quite unworthy of Christianity and entirely out of accord with the spirit of the religion. In view of this misplacement of emphasis, it is not surprising that what the churches actually have to offer to their members or to their communities in the way of spiritual stimulation and direction is of small consequence. Apart from mere entertainment and opportunities for social activity, which are not necessarily a spiritual service, the usual contribution of the churches to the life of their times is very weak indeed. One hears some reference to a gospel which has lost its appeal to the modern mind. There is considerable exhortation that people keep to the old morals, the old loyalties and the old ways, at a time when many of these have become meaningless and the

trend is, for the most part, away from them. One may receive the doubtful solace of religious exercises which are, in many cases, an insult to the modern intelligence. In a word, the churches for the most part insist on treating the world to forms of religion which have long lost their vitality and retain neither attractiveness nor appeal.

One might expect, from its theoretical pretensions, that the average church consisted of a body of people organized for the purpose of promoting the spirituality, or let us say the Christianity, of themselves and their community. Indeed, that is exactly what a church ought to be, if anything at all. But there are few churches which actually are that. Spiritual or Christian considerations have as little weight inside of the average church as they do outside. There is no visible difference between the lives of the members and the lives of persons who have no connection with any church. Hardly a person in the church, outside of the minister, concerns himself with the institution's spiritual task at all, the usual thing for the members being to content themselves with looking after the material affairs of the organization. Even in the selection of their ministers, many churches have sunk to the point where they prefer a clever advertiser and salesman, or a capable business executive, to a man who would excel as a spiritual leader.

Were it not for the money the churches can still command, and the social pressure they can bring to bear, and the social opportunities and entertainment

they are able to offer, it is to be doubted whether they would remain much of a figure even in the life of to-day, not to speak of the future. As religious institutions, their attraction is so small that every conceivable device has to be resorted to in order to keep the membership roll filled up. Attendance at the church services has to be artificially stimulated also. The members themselves are constantly losing interest, and absenting themselves on any lame excuse or none.

One would suppose, from all this, that little actual help in the task of promoting Christianity could be expected from the churches. But the spirit in man can work with strange tools. Though not accomplishing a tithe of the good that they might be expected to achieve, considering the total of the membership, the number of educated ministers, and the amount of money invested in the enterprise, the churches, taking them in the aggregate, still exercise an enormous influence in favor of Christian standards and aims. It may be ventured that at least a majority of the ministers are moved, in part, by Christian motives, and that they are sincere in their efforts to make Christian living the rule in their parishes. That, in most cases, their preparation is not adequate for their task is not so much their fault as the fault of the denominational leaders and other pillars of tradition. In spite of this handicap, and in spite of the almost painful apathy and worldly-mindedness of the majority of their members, many of these ministers patiently and persistently strive as best they may for the attainment of the Christian ideal within their sphere of

influence, and are not without their measure of success. Some there are who, true prophets, pit themselves against the whole worthless system in which they are entangled, endeavoring, by sheer force of personality and will, to demolish the old and build up a new order of things. While such courageous souls are generally doomed to ultimate defeat, so far as external appearances go, they leave a lasting and worth-while impression which cannot but work for the good.

Among the laity, also, spiritual-minded persons are to be found. Like the well-intentioned minister, of course, they are handicapped in making themselves effective in the church by the dead weight of the non-spiritual members and by the round of futilities which the average church activity has become. Privately, or through the medium of their occupation or other community activities, such persons may be able to make their Christianity count at every move. But when they come to church, they find themselves helpless. There is nothing for them to do, no place for them to take hold, unless it be in petty offices which are as so much child's play. While, however, their influence through the medium of the church is thus necessarily small, their direct personal influence is strong, and counts toward the Christianizing of modern society.

And then it must be said that not all churches are equally blind to the requirements of their position. Many churches have made some concessions to the modern mind and to the needs of present-day society, and have become centers of spiritual enlightenment in their

communities. In most cases their influence could no doubt be greatly multiplied, were it possible to break away still further from the tyranny of tradition and institutional self-interest, but it would be folly to refuse to recognize what has actually been accomplished. The very fact that there has already been some progress in the churches toward making them efficient instruments for the Christianization of society is full of promise for the future.

Looking at the churches in the aggregate, however, the outstanding impression one gets is one of futility and waste. A vast complex of organizations all ready to hand for some great work, almost limitless material resources, an enormous body of professionally educated men able to devote their whole time to the work, many of them enthusiastic and eager for the promotion of the highest idealism, unnumbered thousands of intelligent and spiritually capable laymen and women aching to make themselves more effective in the task of realizing a better world—all this is, for the most part, wasted, spent in maintaining, after a fashion, the religious habits of our forefathers. Apart from a few favored locations, the genuine Christian workers who are now tied up in the churches could actually do better work for the Christian cause if they were not connected with any church at all. Many of the more intelligent and capable among the Christians have recognized this fact and are working outside of the churches at the present time. But the spectacle of the futility and waste within the churches remains.

And that can be changed. The first step in bringing about such a change, it seems to me, would be to let the people generally understand that their churches are largely futile and wasteful, and to show them why. There has been altogether too much tenderness in dealing with the churches. The institution has been treated as though it were a nursling, which had to be handled with soft gloves on. It has, indeed, been subjected to some harsh criticism; but that was, for the most part, at the hands of its enemies, who did not care whether it lived or died, just so it let them alone. What the churches need is criticism from their friends. And it should be an unsparing criticism. What if they did accomplish some good in the past, and are associated with many tender memories? What if they are accomplishing some good to-day, as they now are? All this counts for very little, if the good they are doing is not one-tenth of what, considering their resources, they might reasonably be expected to do. This fact needs to be made so plain that everybody can see it.

The main problem is, of course, to remake the churches, so that they may become effective centers of influence for the promotion of the essential Christian aim. To that end, a good deal of house-cleaning is necessary. After the nature of the aim is more fully understood, both by minister and members, that will not seem so difficult a matter as it now appears. One of the first things that needs to be done is to clean off the dead stock from the membership rolls. It is to be doubted whether the church exists whose membership

roll is not padded. There is no necessity for everybody to be on the church books. There is no necessity for the church membership to be very large. But it is quite necessary that every person who is counted a member take full active part in the church activities and assume his full share of responsibility, not only in the financial maintenance of the church, but also in carrying on its work. In addition, all individuals who are out of sympathy with the Christian aim, or who are unwilling to do their best in striving after that aim, need to be counted out. They are the obstructionists, a pest with which most churches are fully familiar. All such house-cleaning should be done by the congregation itself, assembled in closed session, and after full discussion.

The importance of the congregational meeting, for the frank and sober discussion of all the vital affairs of the church, cannot be overstressed. If a congregation is to be effective at all as an agent of spiritual promotion, it must feel its unity and know its purpose. Most congregations to-day are mere audiences, with no unity or common aim to speak of. There is little more coherence than in a theater crowd. As a working body, and especially where the work is of a subtle, spiritual nature, such an aggregation is practically useless. The only way to make a church an effective working body is to get it to deliberate together and to take action together with reference to the vital matters for whose sake it really exists. This is far more important to the life of the church and to its effectiveness in Christian service

than any formal public "service." Every church should be a larger family, meeting often to talk over its aims and problems, and able to act as a unit in every kind of matter that affects human welfare. And, above all things, it should be free and ready to deliberate on the actions and policies of its own members, since they are the ones who represent the church in the community.

There is usually also a good deal of room for house-cleaning as regards the manners and customs of the church. Where the official doctrine is antiquated, the ritual out of tune with modern thought and life, the auxiliary organizations inefficient or altogether out of accord with the spirit of Christianity or with the requirements of modern need, there radical changes are in order. To allow the accumulated rubbish of centuries to choke the life of to-day is something which scarcely one member would agree to in anything but the church, and it is probable that they would not agree to it there, once they understood the full extent of the fault and the nature of its consequences. However, a congregation should come to an understanding, first, of what is desirable, before it proceeded to the cleaning-out process, which otherwise might degenerate into an offensive and fruitless iconoclasm.

One of the serious obstacles standing in the way of congregational initiative and progress is the denominational organization of the churches. Denominational headquarters, with their armies of secretaries and sub-secretaries, denominational literature, the superior officers and higher bodies, all more or less authoritative

—the predominating influence of all of these is to keep everything in the local congregation in the existing rut. If the denominational consciousness in the local congregation shows any signs of weakening, or there is present any tendency toward real efficiency at the expense of time-honored denominational beliefs and manners and customs, it is not because of any encouragement received from the higher organizations, but rather in spite of them. The higher denominational organizations of the various churches usually are unspiritual, conservative and acutely denominational. There may be a great show of piety, but the main business in hand is church politics, and the underlying motive of those is denominational selfishness. The churches of to-day would be vastly better off if all of them would renounce the denominational organizations completely and continue their way independently. It is probable that the problem of denominational differences and lack of coöperation in Christianity would thus be solved without further effort within a generation's time.

Assuming that a congregation is able to withstand the pressure that will be brought to bear upon it by the higher organization of its denomination, and proceeds courageously to clear the local ground of its accumulation of encumbrances, the way is open for it to become an effective center for the diffusion of Christianity in its community. When this has become the one aim of the church, considerable efficiency along that line may be expected of it. It will become the ambition of both minister and people to perfect themselves, so far as

possible, in the knowledge of Christian standards and viewpoints and their application. The activities at the church center will be increasingly valuable for their educational and inspirational qualities. Members will carry their Christian principles with them in their activities outside of the church. The church acting as a body may also come to have considerable influence in outside affairs, though this power must always be used with caution. The method of true Christianity is not so much compulsion as persuasion, a fact which many of the churches of to-day have forgotten. However, the method of persuasion is very powerful, provided it is used by individuals or institutions which are known to act what they preach. Should the renewal of active Christianity as here outlined become general, the effect upon existing civilization would be revolutionary. It is to be remembered that the present church membership is dominant in practically every community.

Under such conditions, the denominational differences between the churches would come to be of small significance. The way would be open for real coöperation between all churches, thus virtually reunifying Christianity. There would be no need, of course, for denominational differences to disappear altogether. Different churches might well continue to indulge in different types of worship and different shades of belief. Absolute uniformity in these matters is not desirable. However, all could unite in the promotion of the common aim, and do so whole-heartedly. Moreover, the

churches could coöperate freely with agencies and organizations outside of the church, in so far as these are pursuing Christian ends.

It is easy, of course, to outline a mode of procedure which would be desirable, as we have here done; but it is not nearly so easy to carry it into effect. It seems a shame that it should be necessary to convert the Christian church to the fundamental principles of Christianity, but that is exactly what needs to be done, if the church is to attain substantial usefulness in Christian service, and perhaps even if it is to continue its existence at all, any great distance into the future. The first step in such conversion will probably be that of getting the people generally to understand the situation. When they do that, we know enough about the modern spirit to expect that their support of the institution will be largely withdrawn, unless conditions are mended with considerable expedition. Under such stimulus, the church may be able to reform itself.

Another mode of approach is through the ministers. It is the ministers who are largely responsible for the condition of the churches to-day. While it is true that an occasional minister may find himself sadly handicapped because of the conservatism of his people, the conservatism that exists has, in part, been artificially manufactured by those of his own profession. Moreover, to the ministers must be laid the fault that the people have not kept pace in religious matters with the progress they have made in other things. Who, if not the avowed leaders in religion, should stand in the fore-

front of religious advance? The rule, however, has been that the ministers held back in the matter until everybody save the most ignorant had moved on. It is the ministers, speaking of them as a body, who hold back to-day. The laity is more ready to advance than they. In fact, the enforced backwardness of the churches is one of the main reasons for the noticeable decline in their influence.

One must come to the conclusion, then, that there is some important lack in the ministers. The lack is not in general ability; in that they are decidedly above the average, even though of late years the most brilliant individuals have generally found other professions more attractive. The thing in which the ministers are short, it seems to me, is Christianity. Lack of proper education may be put down as one of the shortcomings in some, but there is no reason why that should be final. A minister is supposed to study, and he has the whole range of modern knowledge before him for the purpose. The weakness lies in the weakness of the average minister's Christianity; that is, in his understanding of the Christian aim and in his willingness to work for it. Again, it would not do to say that the minister is worse in this respect than other people; here also he is above the average. But that is not enough. To be a promoter of Christianity in an un-Christian age, especially if one is to be a leader in such promotion, he needs to be thoroughly Christian, all other considerations taking subordinate place in his life. If the average minister of to-day could substitute a Christian con-

sciousness for his denominational consciousness, his effectiveness as a minister would be greatly increased. And it could be still further increased, if he would lay aside his anxiety about his salary, or about his own personal glory.

The average minister, of course, has reason to be anxious about his salary. Usually what he does get admits of no more than a bare living, and even that is at the mercy of almost anyone who cares to make trouble. The uncertainty of his tenure is a constant source of worry to the minister. Then there is the equal uncertainty, in case he should lose his position, as regards the getting of a new one which would be at all suitable. The least indiscretion on his part might spoil all his best chances. It is therefore not to be wondered at that it is the usual thing for the minister to try to play safe, keeping everybody in good humor so far as possible, both his own parishioners and his denominational colleagues and superiors. Nor should he be too harshly judged if he stoops occasionally to pull the wires of special influence or tries his hand at church politics. It must be remembered that the minister has the limitations of a human being.

However, all this does not make for any advance in Christianity. Just how the problem may be adequately dealt with is an unanswered question. Perhaps the ultimate solution will be the abolition of the ministry as a paid profession. A ministerless church is not impossible, though the congregation courageous enough to try it would be hard to find at the present time.

There has been so much dependence upon the minister that the average congregation has almost lost its power of functioning independently. Yet there is no reason why it should not. Unless it be the preaching, there is no part of the work of the church which could not be performed by laymen, if they were devoted enough to the task to spend some time and study on it. As for preaching, that is not so necessary as has been made to appear. A dozen sermons a year would do as much good as a hundred, and that dozen could be supplied by experts, at less cost than a resident minister's salary.

Some such arrangement may become general in time, but at present it would not meet with any wide favor. Considering the condition of the churches, it would not be well if it did. Now, if at any time, expert leadership is needed. The congregations themselves could do much to relieve the present situation as regards the minister's financial and related worries by engaging their men for life, seeing to it that they receive adequate support, whole-heartedly following their lead, and letting them make of the church, in each case, what they can.

But to return to our main line of thought, how may the ministers become instrumental in making the churches more effective as Christianizing forces in their communities? The first step needed, probably, is the conversion of the ministers. That is, conversion from a narrow, antiquated and totally inadequate view of their task to one in accord with the real aim of Christianity, and with life and the world as they actually are.

The conversion, in many cases, should be extended to make it a spiritual one also; that is, from lower motives to higher, spiritual motives as dominant in their lives. Given a minister who is mentally awake and spiritually enthusiastic, much can be done with material even that is outwardly unpromising. So far it has been only the occasional minister who took the trouble to acquaint himself with the actual demands of the situation he found himself in, and he necessarily found himself handicapped. Pioneers always do. A general awakening of the ministers is not impossible—in fact, it is very likely. Conservatism has about had its day. When the general awakening comes, the effect will be felt not only in the ministers, but in the congregations also, and possibly even in the higher councils and synods and in the various denominational headquarters. The outlook so far as the churches go, then, is not altogether hopeless.

CHAPTER XII

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE NEW CHRISTIANITY

WE have seen in the last chapter that, were Christianity to rely solely upon the churches for its promotion and spread, it would not make much progress, at least not for some time. It is to be hoped that ultimately the churches may become important local centers of influence for the Christian cause. To a small extent, they are such now. But they have lost the lead in the spiritual advance of man, and that loss will probably be permanent. Other forces and agencies have taken their place, and will no doubt do so increasingly in the future. The new Christianity has established itself in spite of the churches; to a large degree, independently of them. It is now a realized fact, whether the churches choose to recognize it or not. No doubt they all will recognize it in time. But the part they shall be permitted to play in it will be a secondary one.

So far, the work of promoting the new Christianity has been done largely by individuals, working independently. Through whatever medium happening to be available to them—press, platform, classroom, pulpit, organizations, private influence or whatever else may have offered the opportunity—these individuals

have continued persistently doing their best that the new viewpoint might prevail and that it might be applied in both public and private policies and activities. The result of their work is by no means inconsiderable. Further, considering the scattered nature of the effort, there has been a remarkable unanimity in aim and method. Apart from a few extremists, the advocates of the new Christianity stand on practically the same platform in all essentials.

However, the task awaiting the new religion is too vast and too immediately pressing to be compelled to depend solely upon such haphazard procedure. As we have seen, no reliance can be placed on the churches; they themselves need to be converted before they can be of much service. Some sort of large-scale organization of the Christian forces, on an entirely new plan, is therefore imperative. The various individuals and minor organizations which are moved in their aims and efforts by the new Christian viewpoint need to be brought together, and their efforts coördinated, and they need to be supplied with information, facilities and, where necessary, with expert leadership. The movement itself needs to be enlarged, recruits enlisted and trained, opportunities for Christian service provided, educational programs instituted.

The new organization needs to be entirely independent of all existing organizations and institutions. Fundamentally, it must remain an organization of individuals only, and that for the distinct purpose of promoting the Christian aim, as conceived in the light of

modern knowledge. Other organizations will, of course, be allowed and even urged to coöperate, but such coöperation must always be on the general organization's own terms. No special provisos, reservations or conditions can be admitted. No legacies or benefactions may be received except such as are given with the understanding that the organization is free to use them in any way it sees fit. In a word, the organization must remain entirely unbound.

It may be worth while to set down here some of the things which such an organization might accomplish, and some of the modes in which it could take up various of its tasks.

The work of the organization would fall naturally into a number of branches, which could be taken care of in as many separately organized departments. Prominent among such departments might be the following:

A department of research

A department of religious education

A department of church aid

A department of individual aid

A department of general education and recreation

A department of industry and commerce

A department of political guidance

Perhaps, first of all, we should have mentioned a department of promotion, since an organization of this character must have a wide membership and considerable resources and influence before it can accomplish any large service in any of the departments above men-

tioned. Yet, in this day of rapid large-scale organization for almost every purpose that one may think of, this phase of the matter should not present any serious difficulties. It is by far the easiest part of the task. The work of the remaining departments needs some further explanation.

The department of research would be concerned with the study of religion and of the spiritual in general, both as they are in themselves and as they are related to modern institutions and society. The department thus would study, first, the needs and ways of modern man, and, second, the various social factors entering into modern life, such as government, industry and commerce, education, religious institutions, social life, recreation, literature, art, and so on. Its purpose in the study would be to reveal these as they really are, showing what is commendable and worthy of promotion in them, and what is pernicious or undesirable from the broadly human standpoint. In this work, the department would coöperate with universities and other schools, with foundations, with private investigators and any other agencies engaged in a similar task; that is, in so far as these would be willing to coöperate on an unprejudiced basis. The work of the department would further include the giving of full publicity to all of its findings.

The department of religious education would deal with religious education in the broadest sense of the term—the spread of adequate religious ideas among all kinds of people whatsoever, without particular refer-

ence to any specialized institution. The department would create a literature of its own on the subject, and would see to the distribution of this literature wherever desired or needed. In addition, it would make a study of existing religious literature and prepare guides making it fully available to such as might be interested. The department would also provide for the preparation and direction of expert religious leaders and platform speakers, who would act as missionaries of the new Christianity throughout the country.

The department of church aid would conduct its work for the benefit of such congregations and ministers as might care to avail themselves of its services. In no case would its good offices be forced on anyone. The department would, in the first place, make a study of existing churches and their possibilities. It would create a literature of guidance for the use of the churches in working out their problems and making themselves effective as centers of Christian influence. It would provide for the preparation and certification of ministers adequately equipped to lead a church according to the standards of the new Christianity. In this matter, the department would coöperate, as fully as possible, with the universities and with such theological seminaries as have freed themselves from denominational bias. Besides ministers, the department would see to the provision of experts on religious organization and capable traveling preachers, where the need for such might arise. Finally, it would maintain an adequate information service for all such churches as might

desire to keep themselves in touch with the movement and to coöperate in its work.

The department of individual aid would be organized for the consideration of individual problems involving spiritual elements. A correspondence bureau would be maintained for the purpose, and, in addition, efforts would be made to locate offices for direct personal consultation in all population centers. The work done by the department would be one which, theoretically, belongs among the functions of the ordinary Christian minister—that of spiritual adviser. It will be evident, however, that, under modern conditions, the service of unbiased experts in this particular line would not only be more satisfactory, but would also be more frequently resorted to.

The work of the department of general education and recreation would be one of investigation and publicity. Education is here thought of as schooling, though the output of the press might also be included. It and recreation are two of the most influential factors in the making of the modern individual. Christianity is therefore very much concerned as to what sort they are. A thorough and unbiased investigation of them is very much needed. Perhaps this is as true of the schools as of anything. People still look upon the schools in somewhat the same manner as they regard the churches—as something sacred, which may not be criticized. The schoolmen, accordingly, have things pretty much their own way. There are serious indications that this is not always a good way. The matter needs to be

looked into by some agency capable of sound judgment and in no way dependent upon the school system for a living. The people generally need to be informed as to the exact status of things, and adequate ways toward improvement need to be pointed out to them. The same thing, of course, is true as regards the newspapers and other educational agencies, and as regards the various forms of recreation offered to the public.

Apart from this work of investigation and publicity, other tasks, of a more positive, constructive character, could be found for the department as it grew to the proportions needed to handle them. A few might be suggested here. One would be to seek out youths showing promise of special ability and see to it that they received adequate preparation for service along the lines in which their unusual talent or genius lay. Another might be to offer young people contemplating marriage some practical instruction in the art of home making, and to parents some guidance in the matter of child-training. People of a studious bent could be given guidance in the selection of their reading, and the matter of home reading, generally, might be stimulated. Forms of recreation, not easily available through purely commercial channels in the quality that might be desirable, could be developed and promoted. There is, in fact, no end to the possibilities for positive service on the part of the department, the only limits being its own capacity and resources.

The department of commerce and industry would concern itself largely with the ascertaining of just stand-

ards in this sphere of human activity, with the publication of these standards and the promotion of organizations to enforce them. The un-Christianized character of commerce and industry is probably the main source of present-day national and world problems, and one of the main obstacles that stand in the way of the more thorough Christianization of individuals. Moreover, it is probably the most aggressive factor in modern life. If anything of consequence is to be done with it, it must be handled with determination and vigor. And the aims of Christianity demand that a good deal be done with it—that radical changes be made. While, of course, our organization would not be in a position, itself, to bring any pressure to bear in the matter, there would be nothing against its setting in motion organizations which had such ends in view. It would seem that, now there are organizations of capital and organizations of labor and organizations of all kinds of special interests, it were about time for the Christians to organize also, that they might see to it that the ideals of Christianity are not slighted altogether in our economic order.

The work that could be done by the department of political guidance is perhaps as badly needed to-day as any that our organization could engage in. In America we are supposed to be a free people living under a democratic government. The government, however, is so arranged that it can be manipulated by a few, largely in their own interests, while the mass of the voters are practically helpless. Of course, were the

voters in general better informed, this would not be so easy. The few in control are in that position because they know what is going on and how to swing decisions their way, while the mass of the people do not. A Christian organization, unbiased except in the direction of Christian ideals, could ascertain and broadcast, systematically, the problems and facts with regard to the government, it could publish the complete records of the various candidates proposed for public office, and it could even, where necessary, suggest candidates of its own, and, in doing all this, serve not only its own immediate supporters, but the nation at large. In a popular government, the thing needed above all others is dependable publicity.

The various kinds of work which we have here reviewed would not exhaust the possibilities of an organization of the type suggested, but they indicate the kind of thing that it could accomplish. Of course, the quality and efficiency of the work would depend largely upon the character of the organization's membership and the type of individuals at the head of it. The latter could, to a considerable extent, be guaranteed by placing the organization under a board of governors selected from the best and wisest men and women of the country, individuals who have proved their worth and judgment in high positions of public trust. As for the membership, some discrimination would have to be exercised in admitting individuals to a part in it. An individual's record and standing, from the Christian standpoint, would have to be good in

order to make him eligible. He would have to give evidence that he understood and was in sympathy with the Christian aim. His continued financial support of the organization would be required, and, in addition, he would have to assume a share in the organization's work. The latter would necessarily be along the line of his particular interests, capacities and opportunities, and would link up largely with the work of some one department of the organization's activities. It would be to the rank and file of the membership, rather than to its paid staff, that the organization should have to look for the accomplishment of the main part of its achievement. Nevertheless, for the purpose of initiating enterprises and coördinating results, and for the provision of experts and independent investigators as yet unprovided for otherwise, a considerable paid staff would be necessary.

Such, in outline, would be the character of an adequate general organization for the promotion of the new Christianity and for the realization of the Christian aim in the world. There is nothing impossible about it, nothing to interfere with the functioning of any existing organization, in so far as that may be devoted to the service of man's highest welfare, nothing out of accord with the essentials of the American ideal or repugnant to American ideas of justice. The vastness of the program is no objection, since it is a vast program that is demanded, and the details of it would not have to be assumed any faster than the organization

developed the capacity and resources to take care of them.

Meanwhile, there is no general organization of the new Christianity in existence. However, there have been some attempts to do at least some of the work suggested. Both as regards investigations and as regards publicity, the universities have been doing some excellent work. Special foundations have, in recent years, added a considerable contribution. Inter-church movements are of some promise, though, considering the jealous character of their constituents, they are likely to remain weak. Certain individuals, with large resources or opportunities at their command, have engaged in enterprises which contributed not a little to the common good. A multitude of minor organizations have been active, more or less effectively, to the same end. Even the government has been drafted into service and induced to take a fatherly interest in some phases of philanthropic endeavor. And all of this is excellent, so far as it goes. But there is no coördination, no large, common effort to stir the imagination of people or to produce the momentum needed to put difficult tasks across, no systematic survey of the whole field to see that no needed enterprise is slighted. On the contrary, there is a tremendous wastage of effort, a duplication and working at cross purposes, misspent effort in the case of individuals and organizations working in unnecessary ignorance, and an exhausting tax on the time and patience of the well-intentioned in the

mass of ill-assorted and unrelated "causes" which are constantly being brought to their attention. And, after all, what is being done is no more than, to use a figure of speech, pecking away at a mountainous task with pick-axes, when a battery of steam shovels is needed.

The immensity of the task facing Christianity, and, for that matter, humanity, to-day cannot be overstressed. The American people gained some notion of what a big task is like during the late war. For once a hundred millions of people gathered themselves together and acted, through many long months of time, almost as one man. In spite of all the blunders that were made, the momentum and effectiveness of that action came to assume proportions quite beyond human conception. But the winning of the war was but a petty and a temporary objective as measured beside the objective which Christianity has placed before itself. The making of a world fit for humanity to live and grow in, and of a humanity fit to live and grow in such a world, is the sublimest and most daring ambition that has ever been conceived on the earth. To make any noticeable progress in its achievement, a greater and a wider unanimity, a stronger and more capable organization, and a more steady and more permanent devotion are needed than for any other enterprise that was ever undertaken by man.

It is true that Christianity has been reborn. At last men see the full significance of all that it implies in the world. The spirit of the religion's founder has come to be interpreted in terms that the average civilized man

can understand. But there is still something more that is needed. The vision of the Christ still remains to be carried into effect. And it can be done; if but the men and the women who call themselves Christian handle their enterprise in the same thorough and businesslike manner as that which has made modern industry and commerce the astonishing success that they are. No task is too great for humanity to achieve, if humanity wills to achieve it.

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